A Comprehensive History of Eagle River United Methodist Camp in Juneau, Alaska 1954 to 2020

By

Larry Hayden

December 2020

One of the authors of the book "Have Gospel Tent Will Travel," Bea Shepard, also wanted to write a history of the Methodist camp north of Juneau.

Unfortunately she died before she could write it but she was able to create the text starting on page 12.

I have been able to publish a history of the other Methodist camp in Alaska, Birchwood, and also one on the Retreat Center in Hope. So this volume completes the Alaska United Methodist Conference Outdoor Ministry set of history to date.

My apologies for any miscommunications, deletions or other incorrect information and spelling of peoples names. I had limited resources and with churches closed since March some material was not able to be included. I certainly appreciate the comments on the draft from many in the Juneau area.

The Conference archives is established to house any historical materials that may be of interest to future researchers so donate what you no longer need. Thanks.

Enjoy!

Larry Hayden, Chair, Alaska Commission on Archives and History

Charles Wilson, Louise Argetsinger, John Argetsinger

Bea Shepard and Pamela J. Moore

Nico Buss

Entrance/Exit

Working at the entrance to camp

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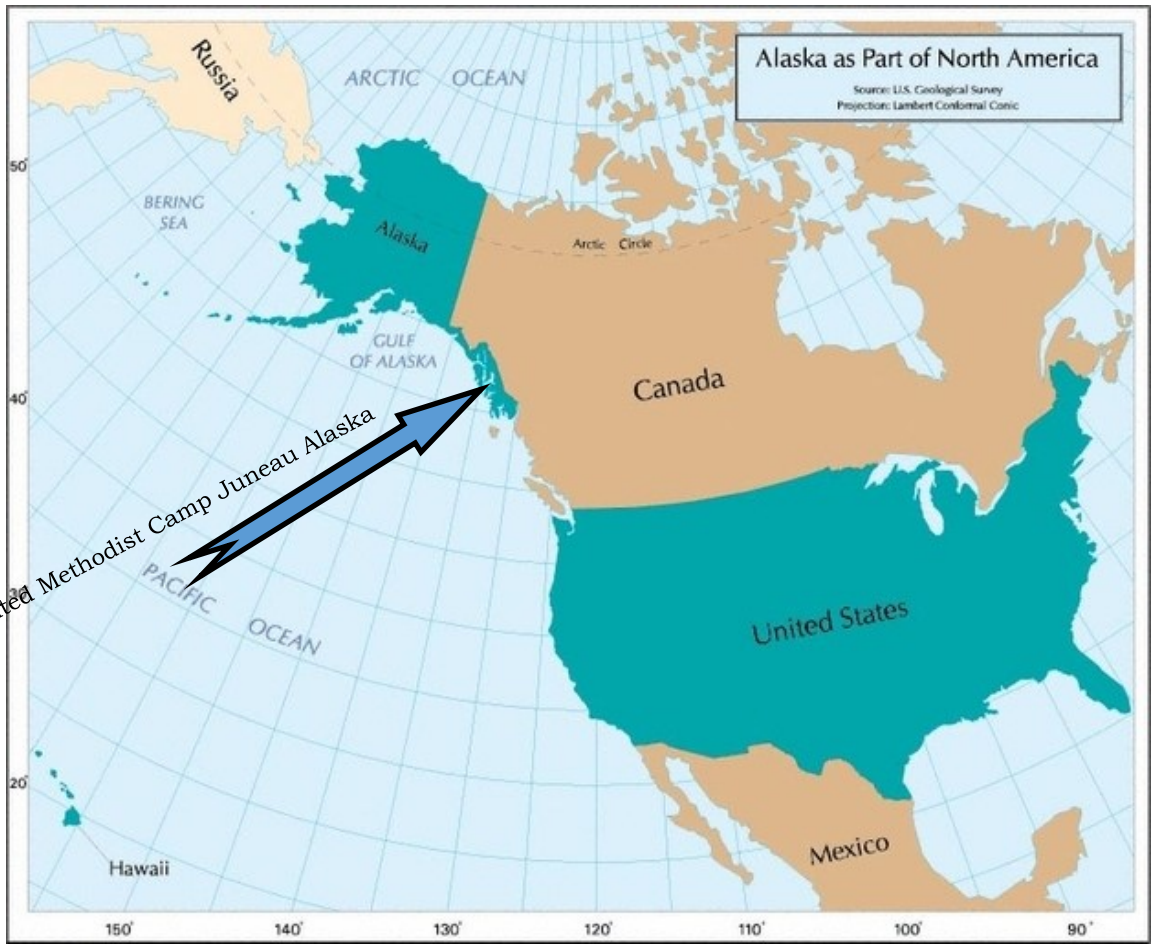
Larry Hayden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PACIFIC OCEAN
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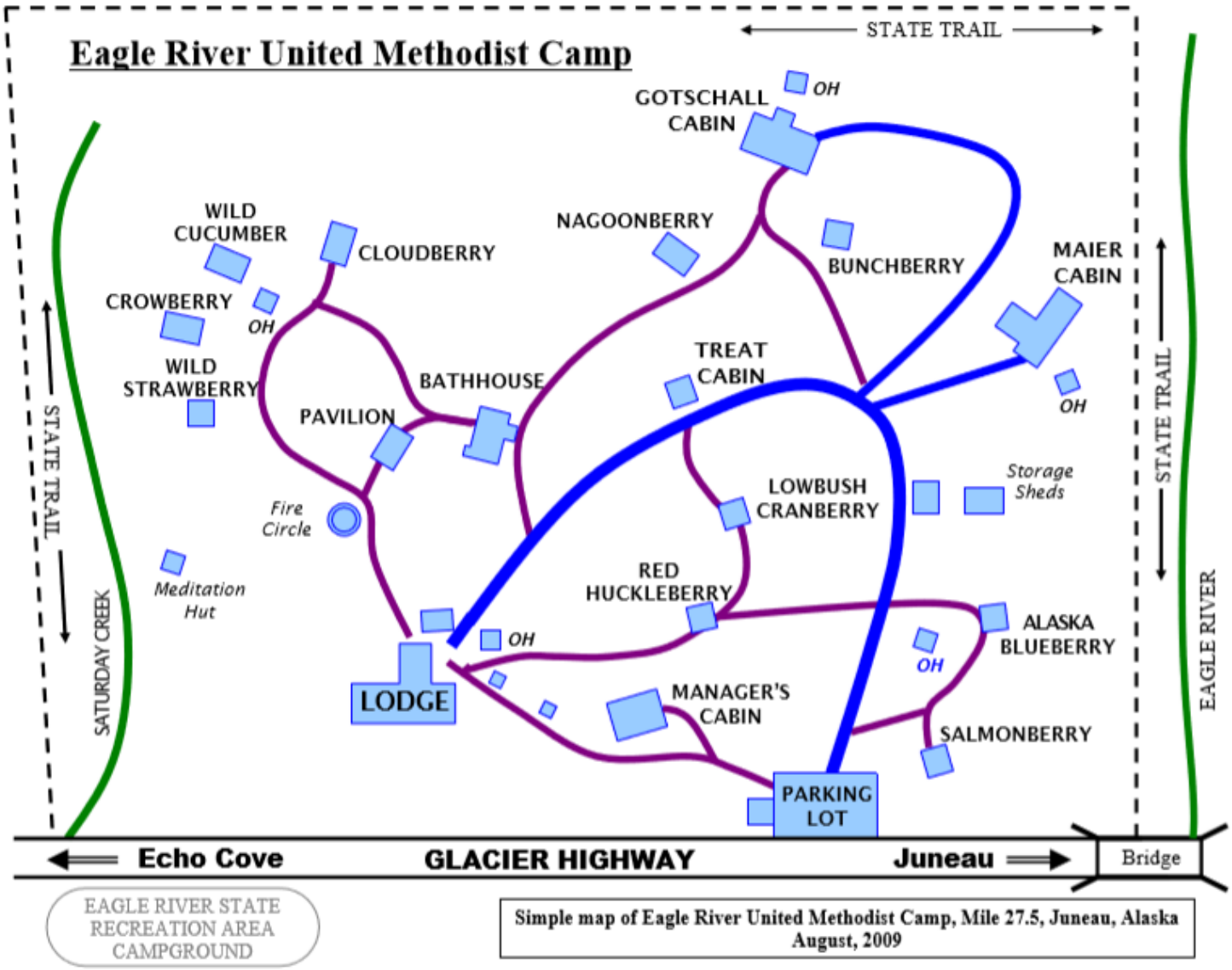
Mexico
Hawaii
50°
40°
20°
150°
140°
130°
120°
110°
100°
90°

The camp is next to Eagle River at mile 28 on Glacier Highway. Some 50 thousand years ago, the area was the terminus of two large valley glaciers, the Eagle and Herbert. It has a natural setting that covers forest, pond, meadow and river.

The property has huge old growth spruce and hemlock trees, black bears, beaver, mink, martin, and porcupines. There are salmon, ducks, and geese. Signs of mining are no longer visible. The land was managed by the U. S. Forest Service for many years.

The Works Project Administration had drawn a number of engineers to Alaska to build roadways and other improvements. One of the engineers, John Argetsinger, made arrangements with the U. S. Forest Service for the church to have a 10-year lease for 84 acres of the land. (After the road went through the land, the committee decided to let the approximately 40 acres on the other side of the road go back to the Forest Service).

Bea wrote in 2002 that "For a long time, in the early days, there was no thought of a camping program in the Alaska Mission. For one thing, it appeared to many that the Mission itself was pretty much a primitive camping program."



Simple map of Eagle River United Methodist Camp, Mile 27.5, Juneau, Alaska August, 2009

Eagle River United Methodist Camp, (Southeast)

Mile 28 Veteran's Highway

28500 Glacier Highway

www.methodistcamp.org

Post Office Box 211385

Auke Bay, Alaska 99821

Office: 907-789-3734

Email: manager@methodistcamp.org

Kinds of Camps offered

Discovery Camp – for everyone

Action Camp – for teens

Camp Kelsey – backpack into the Alaska Wilderness 4-day trip

Camp Champ – for kids who are homeless, have a parent who is incarcerated, are living in a shelter, experience poverty, disability, parental addiction, or other challenges. The Juneau School District, regional churches, and social service agencies partner with the camp to make it happen. 2020 will be its 15th year and is a free camp by referral only.

Intergenerational Camp – Mostly for families

Elementary Camp – fourth, fifth and sixth graders

Junior/Senior Camp – 7th grade through 12th grade

Chilkoot Trail Camp – for anyone 10th grade and adult; round trip Dyea to Lake Bennett.

Camp Get Ready is the Spring clean-up day.

Fall Chop-A-Thon is when wood to cut and stacked for year round use.

SOUL Camp—Skills for Outdoor Living

MAD Camp—Music, Arts, Drama

Teen Leadership Camp

Confirmation Camp

Youth Camp

Family Camp

Backpacking Camp

Music Camp in Sitka

The Abridged Version
Eagle River United Methodist Camp History
1954 – 2020
Larry Hayden, Conference Historian

What follows is a summary of the Journal entries from the Alaska United Methodist Conference and from other sources.

The 1950s were an exciting time in the Juneau area. Efforts were underway to become a state; the pulp, tourist, and government sectors of the economy were starting to gain momentum. The Marine Highway System was yet to take off. Fishing and hunting had always been a mainstay economic sector and Alaska was trying to capture control from businesses in the other states, primarily Washington. Some economic benefits came to the area after the Korean Conflict ended through government contracts to build roads, buildings, and manage resources. And the Borough system of government was yet to be developed.

Juneau in the 1950s had the Juneau successor of the Metropolitan Methodist Church, the Juneau Methodist Church. Douglas also had a Methodist Church. Both churches enjoyed large memberships and with so many families it was decided by many that the area needed a camping spot.

Pastors Fred McGinnis, Richard Heacock, Jr., Bob Rings, and Bob Treat were instrumental in finding appropriate acreage. One of the Juneau members was John Argetsinger who took it upon himself to manage the camp for ten years and helped get the buildings erected, electrical power accessed, and outdoor privies built. It was many years later that the power company extended transmission lines that far out the road.

John Argetsinger was able to arrange a contract with the U. S. Forest Service to have the church use 88 acres for 10 years, the lease being signed on May 7, 1953. Sometime later the Glacier Highway was extended far north and cut the camp property nearly in half and the camp decided to give the west side of the highway portion back to the Forest Service, leaving 46 acres.

To manage the property, the Alaska Mission established in 1955 the Alaska Commission on Camps. They would determine policy, approve programs, and distribute funds, among other tasks. John Argetsinger was Co-Chairman, along with June Marks. There were resources available from the Board of Education of The Methodist Church.

In 1955 a few engineer members at the Juneau church built a foot-bridge over Eagle River to the camp area. During spring thaw it was washed out. The next crossing effort was to have a hand-pulled ferry which was a platform attached to empty oil barrels. This worked for a while until the local government extended a primitive road out to the north and which thus required bridges to cross the streams.

The first organized camping experience at the Methodist Camp was for the 4H students late in the summer.

Master plans were developed. Trails were created; kitchen and dining areas built, a storage building was built; a well was drilled for water; six tent platforms and a worship area were constructed. Equipment was purchased.

The Pacific Northwest Conference sent a work team to help. The camp would eventually be the benefactor of hundreds of Volunteer in Mission teams over the next 60 years. Claudia Kelsey was chair of the Southeastern Area Camp Planning Committee. She was very helpful with publicity. This committee morphed into the Juneau Area Camp Development Committee; then later the

Juneau Area Camp Committee; and then the Southeastern Area. Responsibilities included choosing and securing staff, planning the camp themes and choosing materials, planning menus and purchasing foods, and publicity.

Apparently the first real camping experience happened in 1955 when the combined youth group from Juneau and Douglas held a weekend camp with 18 attending with the leadership of Mr. and Mrs. Bernie Bennett of Douglas. Many youth, adults, picnic parties and various visitors over the next 60 years showed the value of the camp to the community. Camperships were available. The camps became a Conference Advance Special so donations could be directed directly to the camp. Eventually Ketchikan, Metlakatla and Sitka churches sent campers to Argetsinger.

There was enough activity at the camp year-round and with the Juneau population expanding north past the camp that the committee considered hiring a camp manager who would live at the camp during the summer. Rev. Laird Glasscock, a retired minister from the state of Washington became the first hired manager in 1966. Mrs. Loffswold from California was also hired as camp cook. Harold Carter became the second manager in 1967.

Since the camp is on a lease with the Forest Service, the lease needed to be reviewed and renewed periodically and in 1981 the Forest Service considered raising the fee exorbitantly and it threatened to shut down the camp. Arrangement were made to keep paying the current annual fee until a final decision was made back in Washington D.C. The bottom line was that they were willing to sell the land and the process was started which would eventually have the land owned by the State of Alaska and then the patent was transferred to the camp.

In 1977 the Southeast Alaska Camp was officially renamed the John D. Argetsinger United Methodist Camp in honor of the camps first manager. But in 1996 it became Eagle River United Methodist Camp (Southeast). Efforts were undertaken to become accredited by the American Camping Association. Over the years many visions and mission statements were developed to help guide the programs.

Promotion of the camp was done with brochures and newsletters. A multi-media CD presentation was developed. A booth was set up at the Juneau Maritime Festival to promote the camping programs and to sell baked goods. The camp has become a place to hold weddings, memorials and anniversary celebrations.

People donated Campbell Soup labels with the intention of using the required million labels to get a minivan. Glenn and Oree Robinson from Minnesota were the first camp hosts one summer. In 2002 the Alaska Missionary Conference made Outdoor Ministry the missional emphasis.

The first Alaskan camp for Children of Incarcerated Parents was held in 2003 and continues to be a great successful program. The Rural and Ethnic Scholarship Fund helped bring youth to the camp. The Bea Shepard/Claudia Kelsey Outstanding Volunteer Award was revitalized. In 2011 a part-time secretary was hired to help with paperwork and registration forms. The camps 501(c)3 status was updated. A Covenant Agreement with the Alaska Missionary Conference was developed to clarify the relationship between the two. The Board of Directors opted into the Conference-sponsored group insurance policy. In 2014 the Board decided to hire a half-time director in addition to the stipend volunteer manager/host position.

It has been discovered that Camping Ministry provides a refreshing getaway.

Camps and Retreats are Important in Today's World

Jim Clymer of the Homer UMC writes that creative camps and retreats provide a stabilizing haven in a world involved in constant change.

The Alaska camps become an outreach of the church as they nurture youth to go out and make a positive difference in the world.

Camps and retreats can provide ways to experience the natural environment and build a sense of community in a camp setting.

Carl Landerholm, Pastor at the North Star UM Church in 1987, wrote Camping is only mentioned once in the Bible's New Testament in Revelation 20:9. Here, "the camp of the saints" is pictured being overrun by Satan's army.

There is also mention that the tribes of Israel had camped in a foreign land for 40 years and were anxious to settle down in the suburbs.

Other Biblical references:

Genesis 2:3 God rested from all his work…

Exodus 20:8 and 10 keep the Sabbath day holy and do not work

Mark 6:31 Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while

Matthew 18:1-5 Light to the Wilderness reference

Micah 4:1-2

It is at camp that we can learn the need to be "In Defense of Creation." Camping is not optional. It is essential.

Following are **excerpts** from "*Partnership in Discipleship: Camping and Retreat Ministries*" written by National Staff Person Kevin Witt, National Director of Camp/Retreat Ministry

Learn to participate more faithfully in the community of life

Seeks to meet real needs of people and organizations

Care for the earth

Support for groups that serve the world

Congregations have long understood that a unique benefit of camps/retreats is their experiential nature

Intentional partnerships between camp/retreat ministry and local congregations provide the essential link that invites persons into an ongoing, supportive faith community

Modeled by Jesus, who stepped away from his work to go into natural settings to meet with God and explore the meanings of his life (Mark 1:1-13; Matthew 14:23)

Encouraged to develop as leaders

One notable dimension of camp/retreat ministry is its consistency in giving a group of people the vision, sensitivity, and tools to become a caring community.

The creation belongs to God, not to humanity. We must care for God's creation (Genesis 1; Psalm 24:1-2)

We must be stewards of creation

United Methodist camp/retreat centers locations make them ideal for teaching discipleship, earth care, and environmental sensitivity to all who come. They will receive peace, beauty, and healing in return, from the earth and the Spirit.

It is important to prepare spiritual leaders who will return to their congregations and communities inspired to involve others in eco-ministries that will benefit generations to come.

Camping is an investment in changed lives. All of the non-profit groups the camps host share one thing: they exist to make life better in the world and to address real need. We become their partners in helping that happen.

End of excerpts

The most important part of going to camp is the people.

The campers are the people who grow up to be the church

In 2002 the United Methodist Church had over 360 camps and retreat centers around the country.

One can gain a sense of responsibility, confidence, individuality, maturity and many practical skills

All parents can decide if camp is an experience they want for their children

Camping can plant seeds that bear fruit in our lifetimes

Camps can model the faith community

Camping is a way of getting to know other people from other areas and make new friendships.

Camping can help one find new interests, study new ideas, study God's world, learn new activities, new kinds of handicrafts.

Camps are God's sanctuary, a reflection of his creation.

Camp is a place for strangers to build community

Camps are an outreach ministry

Children can resolve conflicts, gain independence, and make difficult decisions.

One can learn teamwork through academic workshops

Every group wants a place away, a place set aside to experience something new

Eagle River Camp activities: have included

A visit from the Raptor Center

Learning about water safety from the U. S. Coast Guard

Sports and games

Archery

Crafts

Nature study

Singing around the campfire

Developing skills on leading devotionals

Taking communion

Eating delicious and great amounts of food

Hiking

Learning and playing a guitar

Participating in Faith Building activities

Horseback riding

Tie-dying

Participating in Skits

Many others

Camping takes its place alongside other vital parts of the Church's total mission. By its very nature, camping affords unique living and learning opportunities for persons of all ages and abilities.

Camping compliments the year-round work of the local church and can reach out to touch the lives of others who are not directly involved in the life of a local church.

Group living, twenty-four hours a day, provides opportunities for living in and experiencing a Christian community. Camping provides an away-from-home, change of place-face-pace experience conducive to new and maturing growth activities and encourages ones acceptance of his/her place in the totality of the created order.

Eagle River United Methodist Camp Southeast is just such a place. The staff and volunteers help develop the spirit, mind, and body of the campers in an environment that encourages faith, caring, stewardship and showing God's love to others.

Through outdoors (mostly, it rains a lot) hands-on programs and loving lessons there is encouragement for friendship, fun, challenge, Bible study and a healthy lifestyle.

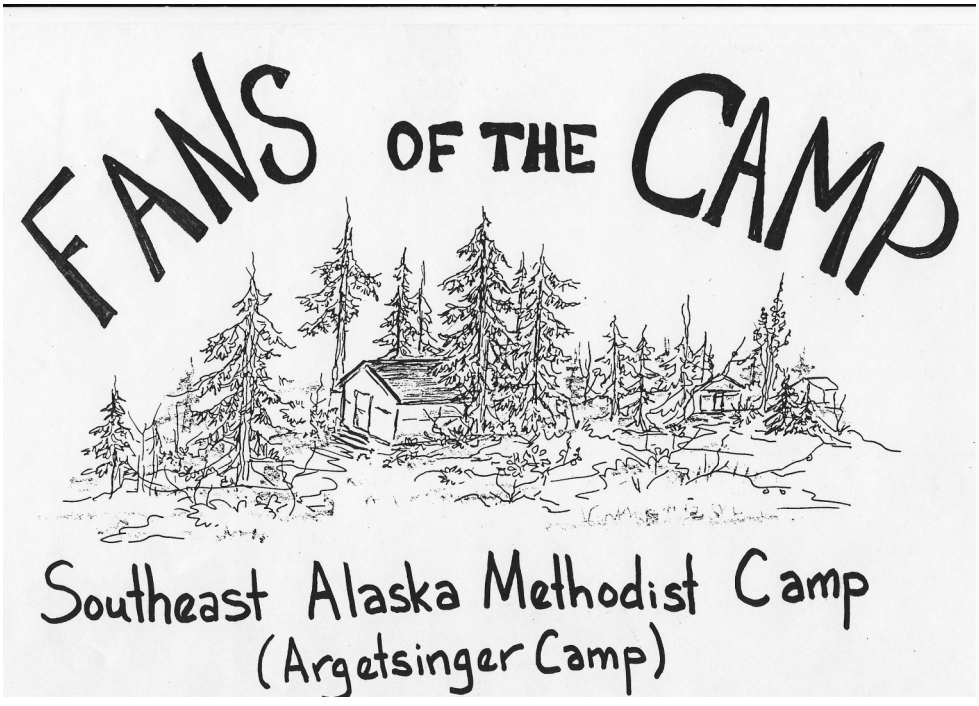
The camp-meeting movement of the 1800s was well-adapted to the Methodist spirit, the Methodist machinery and the Methodist message. William McKinley, Methodist historian, described the campers as "leaving their cares behind them to commune with God and one another under the tree-tops and the stars."

In Juneau it is easy to get away from the hustle and bustle of life to commune with nature, but not very often to see the stars. The camp has been in a wilderness setting offering a year-round facility in bear, porcupine, deer and beaver habitat.

The camp is a place for learning, communing with nature, growing in faith, and fun. It is a welcoming retreat shared with the community, mostly all of Southeast Alaska from Skagway to Ketchikan and beyond.

Some of the activities at camp include:

Singing; skits; carpentry; hiking; crafts; archery; outdoor cooking; campfires; visit by the Juneau Raptor Center; Alaska Native Story Telling; video production; tie-dying.



Bea Shepard wrote:

In 1952 the Douglas church was bursting with new people and with so many children Frances Grant concluded that a camp was needed so the kids could have more space and game space.

Pastor Bob Rings, Dorothy Ann Rings, Claudia Kelsey and Bea Shephard formed a committee to search for a suitable site for a Methodist camp. They looked for suitable flat land. They wanted trees, and not much devil's club!

One day in 1954, Fred McGinnis, the pastor of the Juneau Methodist Church, told Bob that he found a place for the camp. Fred had been on a boat patrol with the Coast Guard and spotted an area that had been a United States Army Camp during the war.

It was beyond the end of the Glacier Highway and there were two rivers to cross. The highway ended at Herbert River Road but the Highway Department had put in place a walking bridge and was used to cross over. On the other side there was a "corduroy road" which consisted of logs set down and covered with dirt.

A man from Oklahoma, named Satko, built a boat, put it on a truck, and drove to Seattle. He brought his wife and family along. Under the cover of darkness (because the Coast Guard advised against floating it), they sailed to Alaska, went around Douglas Island, and tied it up shortly north of Amalga Harbor. A few nights later, a windstorm wrecked it on the beach.

Satko soon filed for a homestead a few miles from Amalga Harbor. He and his family built a log cabin. The road the committee was walking on crossed Satko's homestead. They then forded the Eagle River which was unusually low because of little rain and cool temperatures which kept the glacier from melting so much.

After walking through a field of devil's club, they came across a piece of flat land that would be perfect for a camp. It had views of mountains, water, meadows. It had views of old trees, blue-berries and high-bush cranberries. A great area for nature walks.

In 1951 or 52, things were looking much better at the Douglas Community United Methodist Church. The church had been founded six years before with just 13 members, but now the church was growing and it began to look as if we could relax a little. The Sunday School was bursting at the seams, and we were beginning to have a good response at our 11 a.m. Sunday worship service. The Sunday that we took in 25 new members was, well, fantastic.

But just in case we got too relaxed, Mrs. Grant spoke up. Frances Grant was the kind of church pillar that any church could die for. There would not have been a Douglas Community Methodist Church if there had not been a Frances Grant. She said: "A camp! We need a camp!"

The pastor at Douglas at that time, Bob Rings, was good with kids. He often did some surprising things that would fascinate kids - like driving his car out onto the ice on the lake and then, by maneuvering with brakes and steering, spin the car around on the ice. Perhaps not something ordinary, but intriguing - and it got the kids' attention!

We certainly had the kids in Sunday school. We were averaging a little more than 70 on a Sunday. The record Sunday was 100. So yes - we probably needed a camp.

Bob, his wife Dorothy Ann, Claudia Kelsey, who was working as Parish Worker with the Juneau and Douglas Churches, and I formed a small committee to search for a suitable site for a Methodist camp.

(End of Bea Summary) What follows are ten chapters by Bea giving more details

Chapter I: Beginnings

No one can disagree- the Juneau-Douglas area is a spectacular place in which to live. When we went to camp in California, we would drive some distance to a beautiful "ideal" spot in which to hold a camp. Here in Juneau, we already lived in spectacular places. So what were we looking for in a camp site?

Well, first, - an adequate amount of flat land. That could be a problem in Juneau. Downtown Juneau starts at the waterfront, and goes up six to eight blocks to the mountains. When Juneau was looking for a flat place to build some new schools, they had to first build the lots by filling in tide land. Yes, we looked for suitable flat land. We wanted trees, but not a jungle - not forest so thick that we could not put up tents or other shelters. The entire area around Juneau was a rain forest. We knew we would have to do some clearing - but we couldn't clear solid devil's club.

We looked for flat land, some easily cleared of brush and without trees, and finally admitted we had failed in our quest. We drove to the end of the road in all directions, and said, "There isn't any place!"

Then one day in 1954, Fred McGinnis, the pastor of the Juneau Church, told Bob, "I've found the place for a Camp! You've got to go look at it!"

It didn't take Bob Rings very long to go out and look at what Fred had found. He did a little research on what we might need to know about the area, and then he got Dorothy Ann, Claudia, and

me together, and we set off for the site, which was beyond the end of the Glacier Highway. There were two rivers between us and the possible new camp. (Bob had worn his hip boots, just in case.)

Glacier Highway ended at Herbert River Road, which ran a few miles from Amalga Harbor along the Herbert River. There was a good parking area at the trailhead to Windfall Lake. We parked there, and then we saw something I had not noticed before. There was a bridge across Herbert River. There was a padlocked gate across the bridge, and we were a little hesitant about using the bridge. But Bob said he had checked with the Highway Department and they said it was safe to walk across. On the other side of the river we found a dirt road - more dirt than road, but a road - and we walked down it. (All roads out there were corduroy. Logs had been set down to create the road, and dirt put on top of them.)

Not far from the bridge we saw an old abandoned school bus. Now I began to remember a lot of what I'd heard about "the end of the road."

Amalga Harbor had been a busy little mining town in the 1930's. The mother of a friend of ours had been the postmistress of the Amalga Harbor Post Office. There were a couple of mines up in the foothills and this could explain post office, people, roads, bridges, tracks for ore cars. But when we were there looking for a camp site, we only saw a run-down school bus; that meant something else! Satko!

A while back, a man in Oklahoma - named Satko - had built a lot of lumber into a boat. He'd put the boat on a truck, and brought his family - wife and kids - to Seattle. He intended to come to Alaska, but the Coast Guard heard about his plans and insisted on checking out his boat. After they surveyed the vessel, they told him not to put it in the water.

A few nights later, under the cover of darkness, he put his boat into the water, put his family into the boat, and sailed it to Alaska. A short time later the Satko's sailed the boat around Douglas Island, and tied it up shortly north of Amalga Harbor. A few nights later, a windstorm wrecked it on the beach, and chances are, a few parts of the boat are still there.

Satko soon filed for a homestead a few miles from Amalga Harbor. He put his family to work building a log cabin. The road we were walking on crossed the Satko homestead, and the school bus was what took the children in to school. Satko had gone to the School Board and asked for a school bus to come for his children. After consideration, the school board decided to hire Mrs. Satko as bus driver and gave the family a bus to use.

It had been a number of years since the Satko's had lived here. Satko had built his cabin out of massive logs. We found where the log cabin had been, but most of the logs had been taken away. There were still berries and other garden plants along the road where we were walking.

The road ended on a sort of beach alongside Eagle River. I had not seen Eagle River before, and I was surprised. I had been told that Eagle River was a very dangerous river, full of silt from the glacier of the same name. I'd heard the current was very swift, and it occasionally carried logs and other debris that made it unsafe for canoeing, kayaking, and swimming.

But the day we were there, Eagle River hardly looked dangerous. Bob was surprised, too, and said, "You know, we haven't had any rain for a week, and the weather has not been very warm so the glacier ice is not melting. We are just lucky."

I said, "I'm sure we can walk across it."

Bob answered, "Well, I wore my hip boots so I could walk across, but I'm not sure I even need them. If you want me to, I can carry all three of you across the river, piggy-back."

Claudia and I were wearing tennis shoes, and we managed to walk across easily. The water was COLD and the current was swift, but the river was easily forded. Bob carried Dorothy Ann across and we were soon on the beach on the other side of Eagle River. (In all the years since then, I have never again seen Eagle River that fordable.)

After we'd crossed, we looked up the bank, and saw - you guessed it – a dense field of devil's club! Before we'd even walked up the bank, I was ready to wade back.

Devil's club! If you are overcome with a wave of tolerance, you can admit that devil's club is a beautiful plant. It has large bright green leaves, with occasional sprays of red berries. It grows waist high or higher in huge thick fields. But its beauty is deceiving.

The State Museum exhibit of an eagle nest tree has devil's club all around the tree, and when I am giving docent tours, I teach people to beware of the plant. I tell them that if they are out hiking and trip and there is nothing to keep them from falling except devil's club, they should just go ahead and fall.

The entire plant is covered with needles, which bury themselves in your hands or whatever part of your body that touches them. And where they bury, they fester.

Bob managed to find a way around the devil's club, and we came out into a large area of flat, level, treeless land, that would be perfect for a campsite, with views of mountains, water, meadows, all around. There were beautiful old trees, blue berries, and high-bush cranberries- a great area for nature walks.

It didn't take us long to get back to town, and spread the news that we had seen a perfect place for a camp. The land was Forest Service land, and as soon as they heard, a number of engineers who belonged to the Juneau Church went out to see what we had found, and what they could do to help make it into a camp.

The Works Project Administration had drawn a number of engineers to Alaska to build roadways and other improvements. One of the engineers, John Argetsinger, made arrangements with the U.S. Forest Service for the churches to have a 10-year lease for 84 acres of the land.

We knew what our first big problem was going to be: How would we get over the river to the camp when the river was not fordable? A group of the engineers met and said this was no big problem.

"We'll build a bridge - a footbridge."

And that is what they did. In 1955, the engineers at the Juneau Church built a bridge to camp. The estimated worth of their volunteer service was $30,000. But not too much later, at a camp committee meeting, I heard one of the engineers mutter under his breath, "(the bridge) can wash out in the next storm."

Which it did. It was a beautiful bridge, but soon the river overflowed because of heavy rain. On its way down to the Channel, the river picked up a number of logs and carried them along. When those logs reached the bridge, the bridge just came along, too. Now what would we do?

The next meeting of Methodist Men and engineers' started out with a number of glum faces. They were all wondering how many bridges they would have to build. But John Argetsinger said, "No more bridges. We'll build a ferry."

"A ferry??"

"Yes. I made a model so you can see what it will look like." And he put the model on the table. "This weekend, we'll put it together," he said. "I'll get the lumber we need, and you fellows get a bunch of empty oil barrels. I can get a big cable, which we can stretch across the river. We can pull ourselves across the river with the cable. I'll meet you out at Eagle Beach early Saturday morning."

The camp committee formed, and just fell into place. It was amazing how many people in the two churches were willing to help out to make the camp happen. All the engineers at the Juneau church were truly interested, and since we had no buildings on the property to start with, their interest was gladly welcomed. John Argetsinger, the chief engineer among them, got his whole family so involved that they soon were spending nearly all their free time out the road at the camp site. Since creating facilities was the most important activity for the first years, the facilities subcommittee received the most attention. Claudia Kelsey was obviously the best chair of the program subcommittee, and John was elected over-all committee chair.

1955 Christmas Letter by Bea Shepard

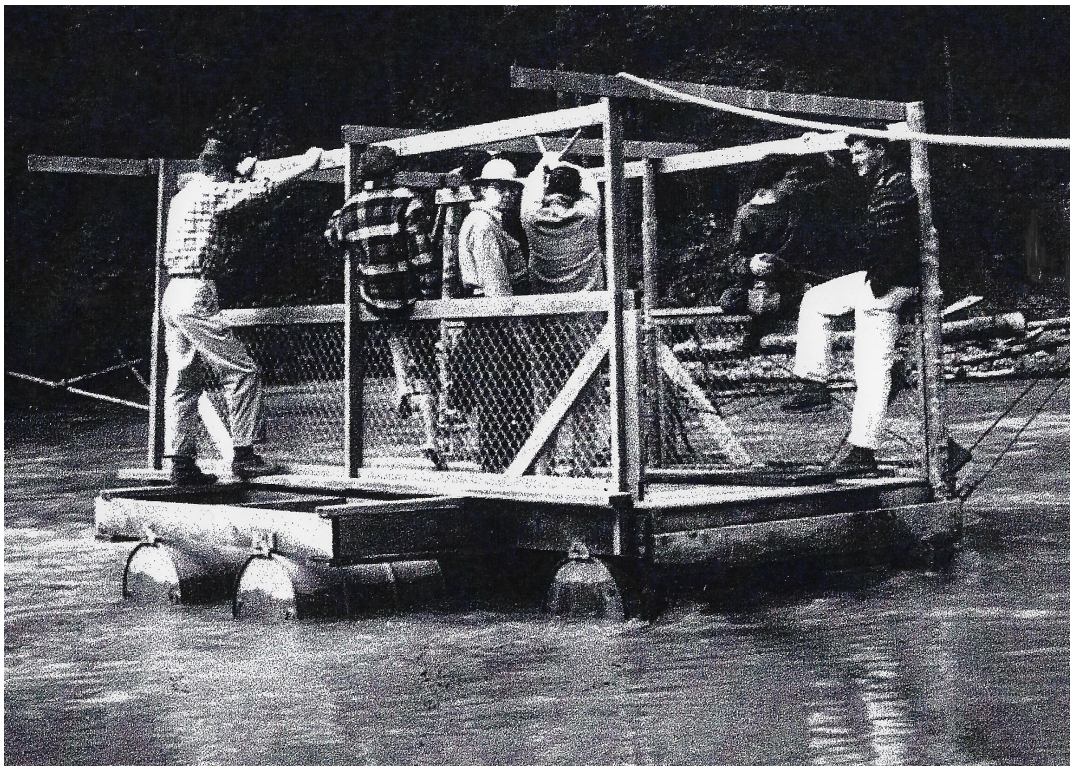
It remained for a bunch of Cheechakos up from the States to feed us our first bear meat. (Claudia and I lived in Alaska five years before we saw our first bear --- and that was a measly little black cub on Fritz Cove Road. We've lived here almost five more and haven't seen another.)

Actually, this is supposed to be the story of a work camp. They killed the bear, cooked it, and ate it, and they served bear roast to a group of Methodists who visited them at the Camp. The Methodist Church in this area has leased one of the most beautiful sites in Alaska, over 80 acres of it, for a Methodist Camp. Last summer 12 college young people from all over the United States came to Juneau with their adult counselor to help us with the building of facilities for our camp. They arrived in a pouring rain. We delivered them at Camp in one of the heaviest down pours in record. and it rained for nearly the entire six weeks. But the spell of Alaska got through to them along with the soaking skins and mosquito bites. We like people who like Alaska in spite of everything!

They did a prodigious amount of work; and we felt it a great privilege to get to know them and to have the opportunity to watch a work camp in action.

A week after the work campers left, Claudia and I moved in with a small group of 4-H-ers, Claudia as Director of the Camp and me as flunky. It vas a very successful camp, the only organized group to use the camp grounds so far. A good deal of the success of the camp could be attributed to the cook, who worked day and night and insisted she was having fun! (Some of the kids hired her for next year before the week was over.)

The Ferry



Chapter II: Volunteer Work Teams to the Rescue!

The ferry was a marvelous answer to our problem! Now we had 84 acres of land for a camp, and a ferry to carry us across Eagle River. The old bridge across Herbert River turned out to be usable for our cars. The highway department did not have plans to maintain it, since it didn't go anywhere. But they gave the camp permission to use it. The Satkos hadn't left a very good road between the two rivers. It was fine when we didn't have rain, but that's a rare time in Juneau. We all became experts at digging our cars out of the mud.

Many people worked to get the camp ready. The Argetsinger family participated en masse. All five, John and Louise, and their three children, Marianne, David and Donald, spent most of their free time out the road, working at the camp. In fact, they spent so much of their time and talked so much about it that many people in the Juneau area assumed that they really owned the camp.

We found that one of the men at the Juneau church fancied himself an authority on building "outhouses". That was a good thing, since an outhouse was the first thing we needed out there. Shortly after we had an outhouse and a small prefab building, which John obtained and put together, we were ready to take on the big project - of actually making our 84 acres into a usable camp.

1956 Christmas Letter by Bea Shepard

All this, and we haven't even mentioned camp. We were fortunate in having another work camp this year, resulting in further improvements on our site, and two work campers who remained to help us with our camps. For the most important news of all is that we had two camps of our own in August, a Junior Camp, and a Christian adventure Camp (and including senior high age). Our "beginnings" were small, with a total of campers and faculty of 30 at each camp. But the quality was great and we were quite exhilarated by the success, of our first camps. Seven campers came from Ketchikan, two hours away by plane, (the only way). They raised $300 for their transportation by rummage sales, bake sales, and the like. ----- Awful thought assails me: summer is coming again and we have it to do all over again! Claudia is serving as Chairman of the Planning Committee and I as secretary. —--So there go some more evenings! But I think you all know we think camping, and especially youth camping, is of utmost importance in the development of every young person, and some not so young: one of our leaders told us that he felt sure if everybody knew what being a counselor at Camp does for a person, we'd be deluged with leaders!) We hope to be deluged with both leaders and campers this year. (Also another thing to brag about, charging a camp fee of $15 per camper for seven days, and at Alaskan food prices, we ended up in the black.) Most important of all, the youth work in all three churches, Juneau, Douglas, Ketchikan, seems to have received new life.

State of the Art—Volunteers in Mission

There was a project afoot in the Methodist Church that made it possible for certain projects to lure young people from all over the U.S. to work for them for several weeks in the summer. (This might be considered as one of the predecessors of the projects now known as VIMs, or Volunteers in Mission.) We soon found ourselves looking forward to the summer of 1955 and the coming of 12 college age young people and their leader to spend six weeks working on our camp.

John Argetsinger, Frank Maier and I met the 1955 volunteer work team at the airport when they flew in from Seattle. Frank was a local college boy that we had hired to be supervisor for the work project, He was majoring in architecture, and he was the wisest choice of anybody we ever got to work for us at the Camp. I noticed that John was in no hurry to get us out to the camp from the airport, possibly because it was raining cats and dogs. However, we finally parceled out the students into the cars and headed out the road. Since it was raining so hard, we decided to park the cars at the trailhead and walk in on the dirt road to Eagle River. The closer we got to the campsite, the more mystification appeared on the faces of thirteen volunteers. We had the ferry - no problem there. But when we got off on the other side --------We put the luggage in the tool shed to keep it dry - and then -------What?

There were thirteen people who planned to stay at this camp for the next six weeks, but the only shelter was one tool shed full of luggage and tools. We immediately discovered what kind of volunteers we had working with us. Two of the fellows grabbed up axes and other tools, fastened a large

tarp to one side of the shed and staked it out a few feet from the shed. Voila! A sleeping area for the boys. A short distance from the shed they discovered the beginnings of a foundation for a sleeping tent, and in a few short hours they had a tent ready for the girls.

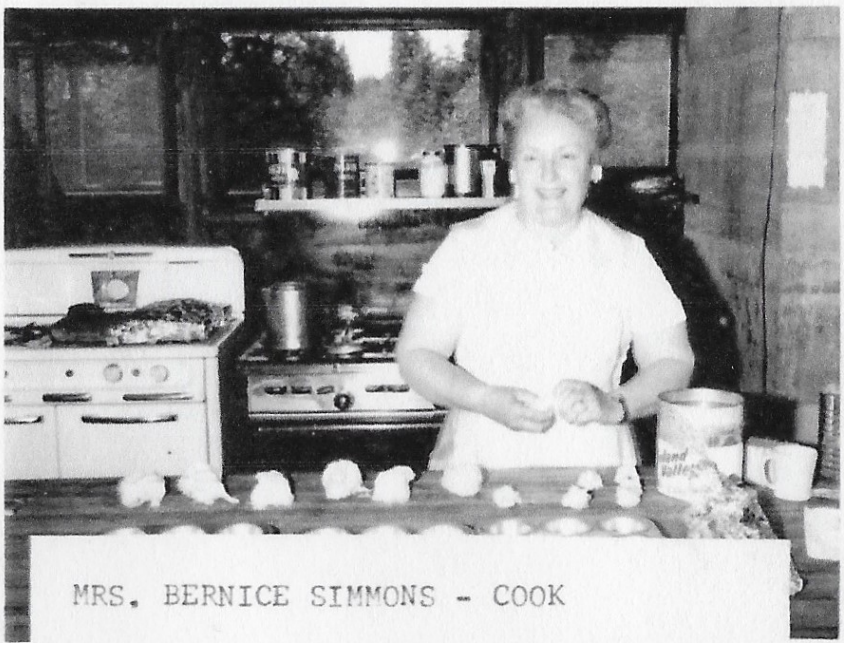
An hour or so after they started to work I heard one of the fellows opine, "Now I see why Mr. A. insisted it would be a good idea if we used the rest rooms at the airport before we left for the camp!" (It didn't take long before they all called Mr. Argetsinger Mr. A.)

It was an interesting group of young people from all over the United States. All were college age but not all were attending college. One was making a good living as a cabinet maker. Two were earning their way through college by working in construction. Frank, the young local man we had hired to supervise the project, was an Architecture student who had worked several years with his father, who was a much-admired local builder. I have told this story about Frank so many times that I'm not sure now whether it's true or one I've made up. But I think it's true. When one of the work-campers had a birthday, Frank took his hatchet and carved out a pair of cuff-links for him. (It was truly beautiful to watch Frank work with his hatchet.)

When this group of young people started working at Eagle River Methodist Camp, we had a tool shed and an outhouse. When they left Juneau six weeks later, we had also nine sleeping cabins, (each cabin sleeping six campers) four outhouses, a cook-house/dining cabin, a "running water system" (a pump pumping water into a large water barrel in a tree near the cookhouse, with pipes running down to the sink, AND to a shower on the porch of the cookhouse. One pipe from the water barrel actually ran through a coil in a wood stove next to the shower.)

Building the cook shack

Camp Water Tower



Camp cook Bernice Simmons from California stayed busy during the 1965 Southeast Methodist Camps. Photo from the Rev. Dick Heacock, Jr. estate

It was said that if you had a good enough friend you could take a warm shower while he sat next to the wood stove and fed wood into it to heat the water as you showered. If you could not make this work, the team had dammed up a small stream near the cookhouse so that it could be used for swimming, or, on Saturdays, for bathing. They named the creek Saturday Creek, and it is to this day named Saturday Creek on all official maps of the area.

Saturday Creek in the 1960s

1985 Christmas Letter by Bea Shepard

One team from Holland, Michigan was made up of members of the Holland Methodist church where Bob Treat is Associate Pastor. (Bob is Pastor Emeritus at Douglas.) They did a tremendous job on the camp lodge, taking off the old roof, and putting on insulation and a new roof. They ALSO helped the Douglas church with its July 4th Barbecue, where over 550 people were served barbecued beef and the trimmings (proceeds to the building fund). After this year's barbecue, we heard from a number of Douglasites that they will not work on another barbecue without help from Holland!

Cross on Mt. Roberts, Juneau

This is the phone booth used to call the
lodge to let them know to send over the ferry

Chapter III: Ferry and the Phone

Yes, the ferry was a great addition to the camp and helped us out very much for several years. But we soon made an important discovery. The first people who came out to the camp any particular day went across the river on the ferry, and tied it along the shore on the other side. The next people who came along stood helplessly on the beach looking across the river at the ferry.

This happened to us one day when friends had come to see the camp. Bill and Ann Norton weren't Methodists, but we had never intended the camp to be for Methodist use only. Bill and Ann were both faithful members of the Catholic Church, but there were many other denominations and interfaith projects for which they were valuable.

Looking at the ferry on the river, Bill said, "What you need is a phone."

Okay! A phone. We knew that a phone would be a great help to the camp. But we also knew it was impossible. The nearest power pole – and phone line – was at least eight miles away. If we could afford to put in the power poles and phone lines that far, we could have a phone.

But that was not Bill's intention. Bill was an electrical engineer and had worked for years at Alaska Electric Light and Power, and at this time was working with the Rural Electrification Association, putting electricity into Auke Bay.

Well, that's what we did. A few of the men from the Juneau Church came out and put up a pole and a phone booth on the beach. And then, Bill and I put in the phone system. First - a phone in the camp kitchen. Then we strung the wire up to a tall tree near the kitchen building. Bill said, "Now we string it down to the beach."

And I said, "How in the world do we do that?"

And he said, "We walk down to the beach, carrying the wire with us. I'll climb a few trees and string it up as we go."

And I said, "The entire area between here and the beach is covered with devil's club!" And it was then that I discovered a person could walk straight through a field of devil's club – with a little care, of course.

Chapter IV: We Get a Bridge

Yes, the Ferry was magic for the camp for many years. Since we did not have electricity, it was difficult to keep all the food supplies needed for a full week at camp. Somebody had to be available to go into town for supplies during the week. Most weeks during Methodist camps, I was that person. I would spend the nights at camp, take the request list to town with me in the morning, do my day's work as the Microbiologist at the public health lab, and then take the supplies out to camp in the evening.

At some point, the state decided to build a road to Eagle Beach. (We weren't eager for the road because as long as there wasn't a road, Eagle Beach was pretty much a private beach for the camp.) But survey crews came and began to make a plan for the road.

The road would prove to be a mixed blessing. The survey line took the road through the middle of our camp. Our fire circle, three of our sleeping cabins, and forty acres of land were on one side of the road, and the lodge, the manager's cabin, and six other sleeping cabins were on the other side. However, the bridge that would come with the road would be a big help. So, we decided to keep the 48 acres on one side of the road and return the other 40 acres of land on the other side of the road to the Forest Service, and move the fire circle and the three sleeping cabins across the road.

While the road was under construction, a temporary bridge was built. So during that summer, we had a bridge to drive across.

We had our usual forest rainfall that year. The river was riding high with lots of debris, and the current was swift. One evening when I arrived at the river, I noted that it was almost up to the level of the bridge. I decided to leave my car at the bridge and walk across. The next morning, the river was right up to the bridge. I walked across and went into town. About ten o'clock, one of the sanitarians came into the lab and said to me, "Your bridge has washed away."

Several people came in during the day to talk about the camp and contemplate what we would do about bringing the campers home at the end of the week. Since the building of the bridge, we had stopped using the ferry and I couldn't really remember what we'd done with it. Two suggestions were made about how to get the campers out at the end of the week: We could get a helicopter, or the small (95-foot) Coast Guard vessel to go out to Eagle Beach.

Since we weren't using the ferry anymore, we'd gotten rid of the beach-to-camp kitchen telephone. I needed to go out to the camp with supplies. I knew that there was an old abandoned bridge across Eagle River about two miles further up the river that I could walk across, and from there, I would have to cut my own trail back to the camp.

I had a machete that I had borrowed from Bill Norton, and I had no trouble clearing a trail. But by the time I'd reached camp to tell the campers we would rescue them, John Argetsinger had gone out and found the ferry, and was getting it ready for use. I'm afraid the campers were a little disappointed that they wouldn't be rescued on a Coast Guard ship or a helicopter.

Chapter V: Camp given to the Schools

The camp committee was organized to represent all the Methodist churches in Southeast Alaska. We also included four members on the committee-at-large to represent the public, because the camp was meant to be available to everyone.

Then a new program, called SeaWeek was beginning in the local schools. It turned out that the camp was a perfect location to be part of the outdoor education aspect of SeaWeek.

As the program developed, a number of classes made arrangements to spend several days at the camp. Hiking and natural study of birds, flowers, and berries were all part of the program. In later years, cross country skiing, tracking, and animal photography were added. It wasn't long before we began reserving the camp for schools all of every May.

It occurred to us that we should designate one of the committee member-at-large positions as a liaison between the camp and the local schools. One year, the liaison to the school got so excited about the camp that he convinced the committee chair – and all the other committee members – that the camp should really belong to the school board, rather than the Methodist Church.

During that period, I was not a committee member. So I was surprised to learn that the camp had been "given to the schools". It was, of course, a little difficult to give the camp away. We didn't own the land in the first place. And we found, upon further study, that the Forest Service could potentially require us to return the land to them in the form in which we'd received it. Despite this, the local school board accepted the gift of the camp, contingent that the school board did not have to financially support the camp. The Outdoor Education teachers assured the board that the camp would support itself. (I do not know where they got that idea, because the camp had never been self-supporting.)

So, when at the next school board budget meeting, the outdoor education teachers requested funding to support and operate the camp, the board said, “Whoa!! If the camp is not supporting itself, we will give it back.”

When the board researched the issue, they found out that all of the property used by the Methodist churches in Alaska was owned by the Methodist Board of Missions in New York City. So the school board wrote to the Board of Missions to say that they were returning the camp. Surprised, the Board of Missions wrote back and said, roughly, that they had no connection with a camp in Southeast Alaska, and moreover, since they already had a camp in Birchwood, Alaska, they didn’t *need* a camp in Southeast Alaska.

Next, the school board contacted the Alaska Mission of the Methodist Church in Anchorage, looking for a board of trustees of an incorporated body to whom they could return the camp. But the Alaska Mission, owning no property, had never bothered to incorporate, and therefore, had no trustees.

The local committee representing the Southeast Methodist Churches immediately incorporated as the Southeast Methodist Camp Committee, and the school board, relieved, returned the camp. We later discovered that the Forest Service, from whom we held the camp on permit, had never known that the camp had been given away.

Now that we had the camp back – and I had returned to active membership on the committee – we found that the outdoor education teachers had made a few exceptional changes in the lodge/dining building. There was now a commercial kitchen with a large dishwasher and commercial cooking range, which put us into a better position to rent the camp out to larger groups.

1992 Christmas Letter by Bea Shepard

The Southeast United Methodist Camp has been surveyed, all 48 acres of it, and if we are patient a few more months, the committee will receive title to it. August 8 we used the camp lodge to celebrate Claudia's 80th birthday, with a potluck dinner - 81 people. (We' re both on the local camp committee and I'm on Conference Outdoor Ministries.)

2001 Christmas Letter by Bea Shepard

Camp - Claudia and I had met at a Methodist Girls' camp in Idyllwild, California. But the Alaska church had never got around to a camping program when we came. In the middle fifties a number of people in the Alaska Mission got the idea that we needed camping for the young people and an effort was made to find camp sites. The Anchorage area found an excellent site a few miles outside of Anchorage, and Southeast found one outside of Juneau. Claudia and I were involved in the hunt - finding and working on the development of the camp 28 miles outside of Juneau - and we still are. (Some people think we’ve been in it too long - Maybe they think we are too old??)

Outstanding development in our planning for Camp - We had a VIM (Volunteer in Mission) team in Douglas this summer to paint our church . (It stopped raining the day they came, and they got the entire church painted!) I took some of them out to see the Camp, and when I said we really needed a Chapel, they immediately began planning to come up here in 2003 and build it! Now we need to get the plans drawn and get the money together for the materials! (Another project which we will be continuing for some years is eating more Campbell's Soup to collect more labels - If we get enough we can get a van for camp! Please send labels!)

2003 Christmas Letter by Bea Shepard

It has been a good year. Years ago I used to judge my life by how things were in my home church and job. Then for a while I judged by my home, church and museum. Now it's beginning to look like home and church? Well, yes I guess so. if I count the Camp as part of the Church. (Should have done that all along --) This year we celebrated the 50th year of our Methodist Camp (Eagle River United Methodist Camp). Claudia and I were in at the beginning. By the end of 1954 we had a permit from the Forest Service to use a beautiful site for a Methodist Camp. The next year we made it into a real camp with the help of a six-week long work-team of Methodist college age volunteers. (Now they would be called VIMs.) And over the years, by the help of volunteers - both local - and all over the U.S., we have developed a wonderful camp used by everybody in the Juneau area (and Southeast Alaska)- Everything has come about by the help of volunteer workers and donors. On July 2 we had an all-day celebration of the *50* years. Several people came who were members of that first work team in 1954 or of the next one in 1955. Over 200 people signed the guest book that day and at least half that many stayed for the evening dinner and program.

(Hand written p.s. to letter)

We're no longer on the Camp Board. I think everybody decided 50 years was long enough! (Actually we weren't on it ALL those years – but a lot of them.)

Anyway we're still interested in getting enough money together for a Chapel – But this year we have to expand the lodge. We're getting too many campers for the present lodge to handle. We hope to see the Tutens in our area – soon. Bea

Southeast United Methodist Eagle River Camp is governed by a Board of Directors with representation from the United Methodist Church's of Douglas, Ketchikan and Sitka, the Northern Light United Church of Juneau, plus representation from the Alaska United Methodist Conference and the "community large" (local Juneau area).

Chapter VI: Congress Finds Out about Us

But just in case we thought we could relax again, Congress had passed a bill stating that all Forest Service land was to be leased at commercial rates. Per the new law, we received word from the Forest Service that our new permit rate for the 48 acres of land would increase from $41 to at least $21,000 per year.

We couldn't' pay for such a permit! The Forest Service knew that. Our annual operating budget was less than $11,000. The Forest Service knew what were doing with the land, and they *liked* our work - and they didn't want us to stop.

As we saw, there was only one solution to the problem. Over the years, land was occasionally conveyed to a Forest Service land lessee, per a brief addendum to a congressional bill. Would it be possible for us to make such an arrangement?

LeRoy Coon spoke to Representative Don Young, who encouraged us. I started writing a letter to our three congressional representatives, but a local regional ranger – who knew our camp, wrote letters to all – telling them not to recognize our requests for it.

We were then told by the local Forest Service staff that they really wanted us to receive title to the land, but THEY, or Congress, could not give it to us. They had so much land out on lease that it would be a problem if they gave some away. All the other lessees would feel that they too should receive their land!

What was recommended by the Forest Service was that we should convince the State of Alaska to select the land that the camp was on to become state land. (At this time most of the land in Alaska was Federal land, but since we had just become a state -1958 - the state was being allowed to select large tracts of land to become state land.)

On this basis LeRoy Coon began talking to the Commissioner of Natural Resources, who was the person managing the selections - and she found the idea to be reasonable. First, however, a member of her staff suggested that probably we could not receive land from the state because we were church-related and there was the problem of church and state. This was referred to the Attorney General's office for an opinion. Fortunately the opinion said dealing with us should be no different from dealing with any other group.

By now, however, this Commissioner was resigning from her position and we would need to work with her successor. For some reason, this position of Commissioner seemed to be a bit fluid, and before we had the problem in a solvable position we had dealt with six commissioners.

When we finally had a Commissioner who would actually get around to making an official request, we relaxed and felt that we were getting somewhere. But the answer came back: the Federal Government would not deal with a request for so few acres as 48. In fact they would deal with nothing less than 1000 acres. Commissioner Lennie Gorsuch really had no objections to requesting 1000 acres and she went to work immediately to request the 1000 acres surrounding our camp. This 1000 acres included a very favorite picnicking and outdoor recreation spot known as Eagle Beach.

The Feds reacted very favorably, except ---.

The Feds' response was that the State would receive all of the land selected, except Eagle Beach. Eagle Beach was so popular with the public that the Forest Service wanted to retain it - mainly for public relations.

Commissioner Gorsuch threw up her hands and declared: " If I can't have Eagle Beach I don't want any of it," and she threw it all back to the Feds.

And we were still paying lease money to the Forest Service! Fortunately, they had assured us that as long as we were trying to solve the problem they would continue to charge us on the old lease basis of $41 a year.

Lennie Gorsuch resigned and her Deputy took interim control. He really thought the State should accept the 1000 acres, even without Eagle Beach, but before he took any action, a new Commissioner was appointed. This Commissioner was friendly to us and the application was filed. The state was given the land, but before the State turned any land over to the Camp, that Commissioner resigned and another Commissioner was appointed. Then, one day, I bumped into a legislative aide that had been helping us with our dealings, and he told me that we were going to receive some land, but a member of staff in the Department had told the Commissioner that 48 acres was "way too much land for a camp." The decision was to give the camp all the land that had been "improved" (i.e. had buildings on it) and the rest of the land would remain with the State for other uses. The recommendation was that we should accept what we could get. I was told that "the Commissioner will naturally accept the recommendations of his staff, so it will do no good to appeal the decision." But --- there was the possibility of appealing the decision. We were given 60 days to appeal --- and this I did.

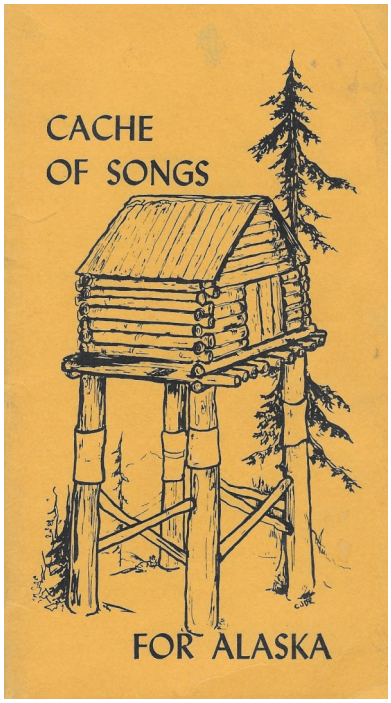
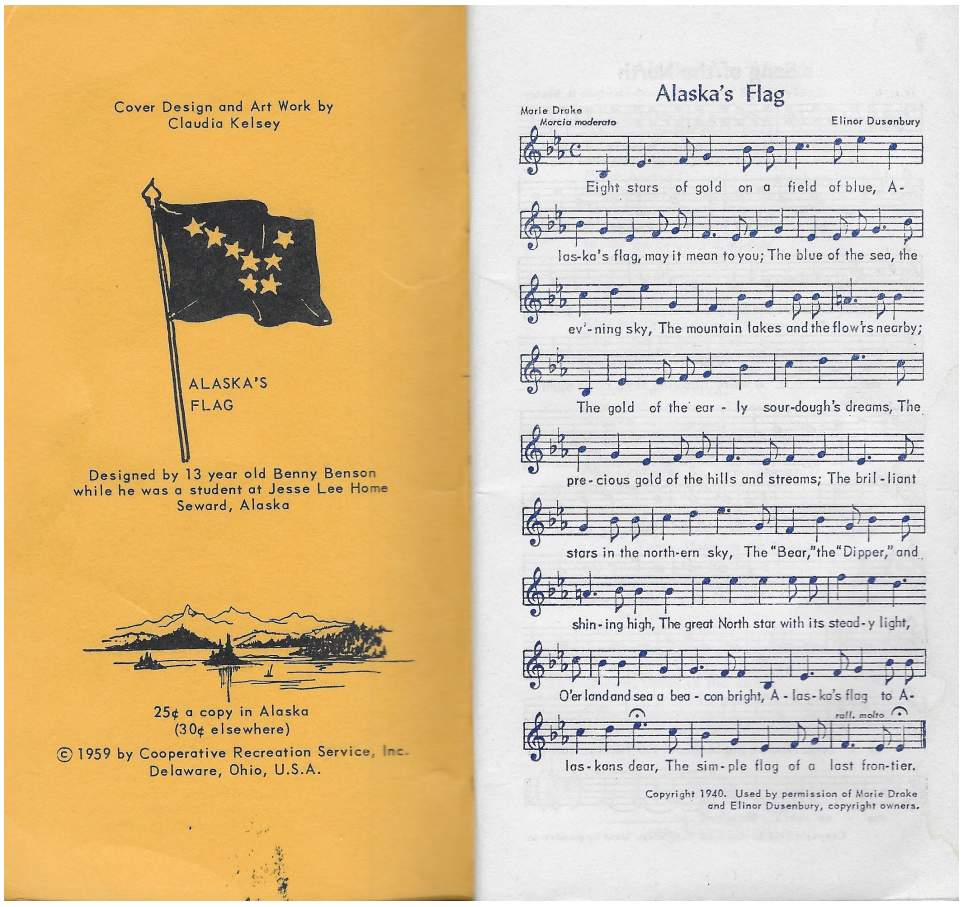
I wrote up a five page appeal and convinced a local judge, Larry Weeks, to check it and put it into acceptable legalese. This appeal was sent to the Commissioner. Then I sent a letter to every person or group that had ever used the Camp, asking them to write to the Commissioner of Natural Resources, describing how they had used the Camp, and particularly how they had used the parts of the Camp that had no buildings on them (Nature trails, cross country skiing, all outdoor education activities, etc.) I asked for copies of the letters. And I got them!

Since the schools had become very faithful users of our camp, many teachers had been there for outdoor education training and the parts of the camp that had no buildings on them were used for hiking, cross country skiing, nature study, study of flowers, berries, etc. The letters were excellent and in no time the Commissioner had a good idea of how our camp was being used. Since we had each year at least as many as 70 user groups from all over the community, the Commissioner was quickly convinced that we needed land without buildings on it, and he sent me a letter saying something like this: "Call off the troops! You can have all 48 acres." We soon had the title to the property. All it cost us for the 48 acres was the cost of a definitive survey.

Chapter VII: Cache of Songs for Alaska

Singing was always an important activity at camp. We were quite fortunate in our Methodist camps at Eagle River, because Ruth Popejoy, who was the organist at the Juneau Methodist Episcopal Church, was very interested in being involved in camp. Also, we had a portable pump organ (of unknown origin) that could be carried anywhere that we went at camp.

Sometime in 1960, we found a neat little company whose business was compiling pocket-size song books for camps. They had hundreds of songs on file, and if you needed some special copyrighted song, they would try to get you permission to use it. Claudia and the then-pastors at the Juneau Church and Douglas Church, Dick Heacock and Ed Stanton respectively, helped me choose the songs. Claudia did the illustrations, and we soon had a nice little "Cache of Songs for Alaska" to hand out to all the participants in our Methodist camps.



Cover Design and Art Work by
Claudia Kelsey

ALASKA'S
FLAG

Designed by 13 year old Benny Benson
while he was a student at Jesse Lee Home
Seward, Alaska

25¢ a copy in Alaska
(30¢ elsewhere)

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Delaware, Ohio, U.S.A.

Alaska's Flag

Marie Drake — Elinor Dusenbury

Marcia moderato

Eight stars of gold on a field of blue, A-
las-ka's flag, may it mean to you; The blue of the sea, the
ev'-ning sky, The mountain lakes and the flow'rs nearby;
The gold of the ear - ly sour-dough's dreams, The
pre-cious gold of the hills and streams; The bril-liant
stars in the north-ern sky, The "Bear," the "Dipper," and
shin-ing high, The great North star with its stead-y light,
O'er land and sea a bea - con bright, A - las-ka's flag to A-
rall. molto
las-kans dear, The sim-ple flag of a last fron-tier.

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Chapter VIII: Flush Toilets

Strangely enough, the problem of flush toilets was probably the most heatedly discussed of any subject brought up at the Committee meetings. Why??

Of course, when we first started using the camp site, it was genuinely a "primitive" camp. Many people claimed that this was their reason for going to Camp. ("Getting back to Nature?") Others, however, preferred more modern facilities, and, if given their choices, chose to go to Camp at some place like The Shrine, where the rooms in the Lodge had private bathrooms.

Chapter IX: Thank God for VIM's

Possibly the most important fact we need to remember about our camp is that the only reason we have it is because of the dedication of volunteers. Planning, Construction, Program, Financing.

Chapter X: Naming the Camp

For a number of years, we called the camp "The Methodist Camp at Eagle River." Then a few people decided we should name it Argetsinger Camp, recognizing the years of work by John Argetsinger and his family.

There were some problems with the name. For one thing, many people actually had trouble with the word "Argetsinger". Many thought it had something to do with music: Arget *singer*. Others thought it was too long and complicated. However, the camp was known as Argetsinger Camp for several years.

Then the camp committee appointed an additional committee to consider name recommendations. The committee said that the camp should not be named for any one individual or family, since there were so many incredible volunteers who had made the camp possible. There were two suggestions: Southeastern United Methodist Camp, or Eagle River United Methodist Camp (Southeast). The committee chose "Southeast United Methodist Camp", but just a few years later, the camp committee decided that the official name should be "Eagle River United Methodist Camp (Southeast)".

The recommendation committee suggested that buildings be named for individuals. Per their suggestions, the lodge was named after the Argetsinger family. The winter cabin was called "Maier"; the manager's cabin, "Jacoby"; and the second winter cabin, "Gotschall". Later, the camp committee decided to name the sleeping cabins after berries that grow in the area: Nagoonberry, crowberry, wild cucumber, cloudberry, red huckleberry, lowbush cranberry, bunchberry, salmonberry and Alaska blueberry.

This marks the end of Bea Shepherd's Chapters

Reflections from Previous Campers/Staff

Eagle River United Methodist Camp (ERUMC) – Memories from **Sandra Coon** April 22, 2020

What does ERUM Camp mean to me?

Forty plus years ago, my husband LeRoy Coon and I came to Juneau and became involved with the Eagle River Camp. I had attended Methodist camps since I was in 7th grade and throughout my teen years. As a mother, I wanted my four kids to have some of these wonderful experiences that I had grown up with.

Our kids attended ERUMC several summers. For a while, there wasn't anyone to lead summer camp. All this while, LeRoy and I volunteered out at camp – repairing, replacing, helping build new cabins, filling pot holes, cutting firewood and numerous tasks. We hosted many work teams who came to help maintain and build at camp. A wonderful VIM work team from Kansas, led by Nancy McKellar, started coming and helped lead Discovery Camp for 3-8th grade kids. I became the Dean of these camps for about 10 years running.

I felt that these youth needed the connection to God's beautiful creation, helping them learn in such a natural surroundings, and learning to value nature through a Christian foundation. Our campers learned to use their bibles and acquired a variety of skills: leadership, independence, sharing, patience, taking turns, overcoming fear of the woods and dark, trying new foods and forming life-long friendships. It became a lasting impact on their lives!

Last summer, I attended Family Night at Discovery Camp and several of the counselors who had been my campers when they were youngsters came rushing up to greet me. It was a fun reunion! Camp had been such a special part of their growing up they still wanted to help at camp and enjoy their long time friendships. Three of them got matching tattoos on their ankles of a cabin, trees, & campfire. Proof of their connection to this outstanding life experience.

Hundreds of hours of time in our 40 years of connection to camp, LeRoy and I worked diligently as volunteer laborers, camp board members, Volunteer In Mission (VIM) coordinators, and Camp Dean. I served as the Alaska United Methodist Missionary Conference Volunteer In Mission coordinator, served on the ERUMC Board, as well as serving as the Discovery Camp Dean. We tried many new things and started many beloved camp traditions such as the muddies and prayer buddies with the prayer rocks.

LeRoy served on the board for approximately 20 of those years including service as Board President, Facilities Chair, and VIM organizer. Over the years, he worked hard for camp ownership to revert back to the Southeast Methodist churches when it was owned by the Juneau School District. He met with Congressman Don Young and government agencies and ownership was eventually returned to the Southeast Methodist Churches. The camp eventually became its own nonprofit entity with ties to the Alaska United Methodist Missionary Conference.

LeRoy passed away on April 4, 2014 but for the two years prior to his death, he built 30 sets of bunk beds for all the cabins at camp. He played the harmonica and he thoroughly enjoyed playing with the Eagle River Camp Jug Band during Discovery Camp Family Skit nights which included Bunti & Rocky Reed, Virgil and Lori Fredenburg. While LeRoy didn't ever read music, he played the harmonica by ear and Sanctuary was his favorite song to play. One year, we were in dire need of male counselors at Discovery Camp and LeRoy stepped up to the challenge. He

brought a harmonica for each of the boys in his cabin and tried to teach them how to play. The kids in his cabin would follow him like the pied piper as they traveled all around camp and it was a great way to keep the bears away while bonding with each other and we all knew when that cabin arrived for campfire time.

Upon his death, friends and family constructed a memorial bench that is located at the edge of the meadow behind the Argetsinger Lodge. The camp holds a special place in our family where our children (Dan Coon, Marla Olsen, Karen Wright, and Beth McEwen), grandchildren (Josh & Jacob Coon, Melanie Olsen, Lucinda Fink, Gregory & Wesley McEwen), and great grandchildren (Cherish and Logan Fink, Tyler & Anna Coon, and Zimrey McEwen), have been campers, counselors, counselor in training (CITs), camp deans, board members (Dan, Beth, Karen & Jeff Wright) and camp managers (Karen & Jeff Wright). We have held family reunions, birthdays, weddings, and memorials at camp. Like the magnificent towering trees that surround our beloved camp – our family's roots are forever entwined with those of Eagle River United Methodist Camp.

Memories from **Bunti Reed,** April 30, 2020

Reflections on Eagle River Methodist Camp
My relationship to the Eagle River Methodist Camp has been as camper, counselor, camp cook, resident manager, and long-time board member. As an adult with children, I came to this camp on the second day I came to Alaska. The first time I drove the tree lined dirt road and saw that old wooden sign, I knew I'd become part of this camp.

When asked what the camp means to me, I become overwhelmed with the thoughts of what this camp has provided for me, my family and generations of Juneau children and families. As Matthew 6:22 explains, "The lamp of the body is the eye. If, then, your eye is simple, your whole body will be bright..." I think having a simple eye means one is open to the light, lives less complicated and at a slower pace. At camp, this way of viewing life allows for glimpses of the creations of our extraordinary God, and we can catch traces of his imprint everywhere in our environment, if we simply take the time to enjoy it.

The first thing that always happens when I get to camp is that I am filled with appreciation for the gorgeous remote location. The camp is situated between a creek and a glacial river, across from spectacular Eagle beach. I drink in the smell and sight of ancient trees, lovely meadows and rainforest crystal-clear air. There are rustic but snug buildings, fire circles, winding paths, cabins, a pavilion, and the large lodge where we can gather in fellowship to eat wonderful food from the terrific kitchen. By the time I have taken in all of these, I am truly away from my normal day,

I can feel my stress level drop. Memories crowd the edge of my thoughts: waking up surrounded by nature, hearing other campers stirring in the morning; the ringing of the bell to call us to the lodge—for food, for prayer, to let us know that there is a bear in camp; singing by the campfire, prayers at sunrise, the birds chirping in the tree, or the squirrel scurrying away with a nut.

I am filled with gratitude for the privilege of living at camp in the manager's cabin for five years in the early 2000s. Working side by side with my husband greeting and checking in each group as they came in, making "the rounds", keeping the camp running with only volunteer labor, being surrounded by wildlife, and feeling the weight of my "city" work day fall away when I drove into the parking area each day are memories that warm me to my core. What a wonderful and varied population of folks came to camp- I am grateful

for the many people I have met, and for being able to interact with them in a neutral setting widening my view of human nature. At camp, it does not matter who you are or where you came from, all we ask is that you value others, the environment and yourself.

Camp has given me many of my closest friends. Summer camps are a unique and sometimes weird place- any person who has ever gone to one can vouch for this- but what is even weirder than the place are the people that choose to go there or work there. The good news? Those people have been through the same epiphanies at camp that I have, and we already have a bond when we meet. Whether it was snuggling in your sleeping bag on the hard bunk, whispering to your cabin mates when you should be asleep, showering in the too rustic bath house, feeling spiritual in the morning devotions, doing archery, games or music, hiking, or just general tomfoolery, the best friends I could ever make truly understand the experience. At camp I laughed the hardest, smiled the biggest, both laughed and cried with friends, learned new skills, was touched to my soul and made the best memories and friends I could ask for.

When I was a kid, the most important thing camp ever gave me was a safe spiritual home**.** I found a place where I felt unconditional love, happiness, and comfort for a couple of weeks during the toughest year of my childhood. While everyone's experiences differ, I believe this might be true for any camper, counselor, or alumni of a sleepaway camp that has ever needed a place where their lives could feel safe, even for just a little bit. Camp is a place we can call our own, where we know we will always be able to find our friends, family, and even ourselves. At camp it seems as though time slows as we relax, connect and reminisce on simpler times in a landscape that seems unchanged.

Working to keep creating this experience for today's youth and families is one of the most fulfilling things of my life. I have seen lives changed, the cares of the world drop from one's shoulders, and have watched lost youth find a place where they are unconditionally accepted and allowed to learn skills in their own way.

Camp means many things to many people, and I have so many personal and treasured stories. My husband's baptism at camp in his 60s, at risk kids coming out of their shell and laughing with glee, Thanksgivings with generations of Juneau families in the lodge; meeting folks from all over the world as they come to the camp, cooking for Discovery Bible camp for 16 years, being Dean for 3, and watching my children, and now grandchildren grow up and become as involved and passionate about the camp as I am. It is their camp as well. It is "our" camp.

There are many stories that go all the way back to acquiring the camp in 1955. Those of us currently involved stand upon their shoulders. There are too many names to mention in this paper, and many changes over those years. So many stories to tell. Only in the last 20 years have many modern conveniences have come to camp, year-round. The road is now paved all the way to and past the camp driveway, a neighbor lives across the street at a ranger house. There are flush toilets year-round, telephone service and internet. Those original campers who drove as far as the river on pioneer roads, forded or ferried the rivers carrying water, to build those first structures who are still alive, are still in touch with the camp, gratified by the camps survival. Their contributions are not forgotten.

To My Surprise
By: **Susan Loy**
April 23, 2020

Although my first trip to the camp was in 2012, I had connections to the camp before then. You see, my mother (Lucy Shifton) and daughter (Emily Loy) had already been going to the camp for several years. I know they had enjoyed themselves during their trips to Alaska because they always came home with wonderful stories of their time at CAMP! I'm really not a camping type of person, even though I had years of Girls Scout experience thanks to my mom.

So in 2012, my mom and daughter convinced me that they and the camp could use my assistance. They know me well and used their knowledge wisely. They answered my questions truthfully and I said, "Yes, I'll go." A lot of planning and meeting of new people went into the trip. It was an ADVENTURE! After all, how many people get to go to Alaska?! Not to mention, get to experience camp life with fellow Kansans and Alaskan locals? The group of individuals from Kansas (some previously known to me and some new friends) were interesting and great travel partners. Our arrival in Juneau, meeting the local church members, and the overnight stays at several churches in Juneau/ Douglas were truly fun times.

Then we all went out to the camp. I was a surprised and eventually called home, "I've been conned! There are bugs, bears and outhouses!" Then I had to think back to my conversation with my mom and daughter…

I asked: "Are there lots of bugs?"
Their reply: "Well yes, but mostly you don't see them." (True, "no see-ums")
I asked: "Do we have to deal with wildlife?"
Their reply: "Oh, we don't intentionally interact with them." (True, we are given the safety info and procedures to stay away from the BEARS when they come around!)
I asked: "Are there bathrooms and showers for the cabins?"
Their reply: "Yes! We shower regularly!" (True, see the schedule and the shower house is by the lodge. Also, the outhouses are technically **NEAR** the cabins!)

So, after the initial surprise, the week went by so fast! A ton of songs, campfires, nature, and social activities were enjoyed by all. The many talks with campers and fellow counselors made the week fun-filled and exhausting, but in a good way!

The beauty of the woods and the mountains were awe-inspiring. The sounds and silence of nature were soul soothing. My week at camp had imprinted on my heart. With each passing day, I better understood that people of all ages and backgrounds could truly become friends and feel like family in a very short time. I finally realized why my mother and daughter kept going back to a camp in Alaska year after year!

In 2013, I offered to go back to Camp and help out. I hoped to see all of my camp family from the year before and maybe meet new friends who would become part of my growing Alaska camp family as well. To my surprise, I went back to Eagle River United Methodist Camp in 2013 and I had another memorable year that will be forever etched in my heart. Thank you to everyone who organized the trips to the camp and who allowed me to participate. I believe that those who go to help at the camp get as much out of the experience as those who attend as campers.

The Pavilion

Reflections from **Nancy McKellar**, April 22, 2020

The first time that my daughter Anna Bassham and I were at Eagle River United Methodist camp was in 1999 as part of a work team from First United Methodist Church in Wichita, Kansas. The task of the team was to start building the back porch of Meier Cabin. We had to clear some trees before starting on the construction. The plan was for the porch to have a small room that would contain a porta-potty for use by persons who travel in wheelchairs. Meier Cabin already had a ramp for wheelchair users to enter and exit the cabin.

I was stunned by the beauty of the camp environment. A few days into our time at camp, the team leader, Bonnie Laycock, asked me how I would feel about returning on a future work team to Eagle River. My answer was 'in a heartbeat!" The next year I led the first of 10-plus annual work teams from our church in Kansas to help run church camp at Eagle River. This experience enriched my life and strengthened my faith in so many ways.

You see the vastness and magnificence of God's creation at camp. One year the Northern Lights had been seen in the Juneau area several times. In the middle of the night, we got up and went to the meadow outside the lodge and watched. I will always remember laying on a picnic table at 3 a.m., watching God's gift of an amazing 'light show'. Then there are the animals: bears, porcupines, 'no see-ums', salmon, crows, whales, ….

I got to see children with rough starts in life "make it." One girl about age 10 was in foster care and would be disruptive and often run off. It was very difficult to have her in a group. I got a call on the walkie-talkie asking me to come out to the cabin with arts and crafts because she was being very disruptive, and the counselors were afraid that she would run. I asked the girl to help me with something on the porch of the cabin. I explained that the campers would each be getting a blanket made by a mother in Kansas whose only child had died and that I needed her to help me prepare a large thank you page that everyone could sign. The girl asked me if I could make 'bubble letters" (ones that look like long balloons that can be twisted into different shapes by clowns). I told her that I would try. She wanted me to write – in bubble letters – "We're sorry for your loss." Here was a child who had lost so much in her life already but who expressed compassion for someone she would never meet. The next summer the girl was doing much better. When she was picked up from camp, I told her foster mother how much better she did, to which she replied, "She's not my foster child. She's my daughter. I adopted her and her siblings." This girl was not the only child who I saw thrive after being adopted by his/her foster parent.

Church camp is the setting in which campers learn valuable life lessons:

**We must help one another: Camping in Alaska requires respect for dangers in the environment, including how to behave in bear territory and how quickly the tide comes in. Campers see how Christians work together to be safe in that environment. They learn Bible stories and songs.*

The children and adults that I have met in Alaska often have a great sense of humor, BUT they never joke about safety issues. In that environment, you must look out for one another.

**Happiness comes from our relationships with God and with others, not from our possessions. Money means nothing at camp – there is no camp store. Everyone is wearing old clothes. We have the most fun at campfires with stories and songs, at the mud fight at the beach, at skits the last night, and when sitting in a circle in the dark in our cabin making sparkles by chewing spearmint life savers as fast as we can.*

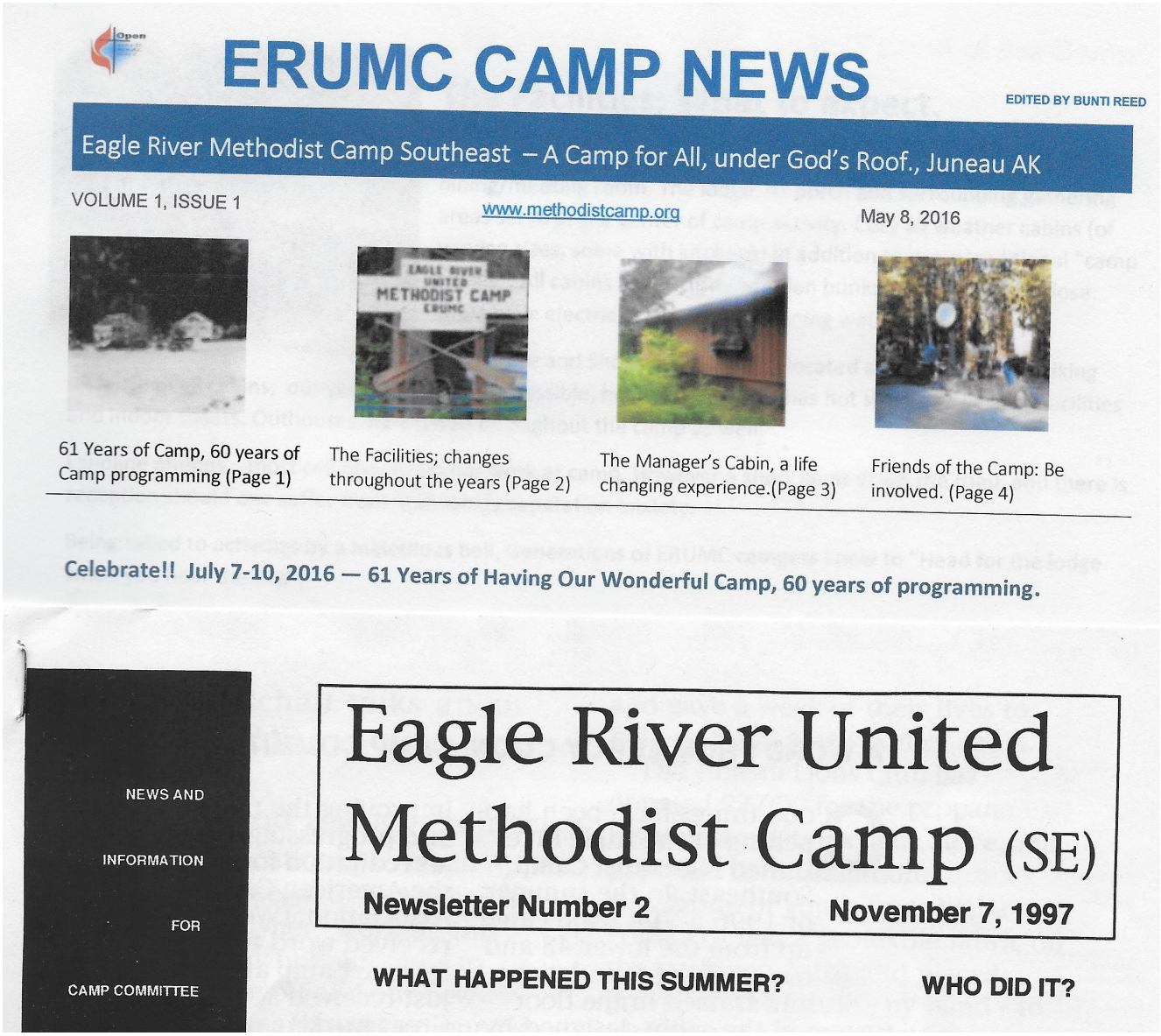
Helping at Eagle River has made a huge difference in my life:

I made life-long friends – with other adults in Alaska, with those on the work teams, and with campers who are now adults. I have also seen campers form enduring friendships.

I learned that children worry about their families much more than adults realize: My favorite age group to bunk with are the middle-aged girls (usually 5th, 6th, and 7th graders). I like to have everyone in the cabin participate in prayers after we are all in our bunks and the lights are out. Each of us says something that we are thankful for. Then those who wish may say something that they are worried about. There has never been a camper who has said that she was worried about disagreements/rivalries with other kids or about wanting possessions. Instead the girls always pray about their families.

I have learned more about how others see the world. This helps me to remember that Christ died for people like me as well as people not like me – people like me are not His 'favorite' kids.

And, I have witnessed what it truly means to "be beautiful on the inside" in each moment that I have been blessed to be with Claudette Curtis, the most beautiful human being I have ever known.



ERUMC CAMP NEWS

EDITED BY BUNTI REED

Eagle River Methodist Camp Southeast – A Camp for All, under God's Roof., Juneau AK

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

www.methodistcamp.org

May 8, 2016

61 Years of Camp, 60 years of Camp programming (Page 1)

The Facilities; changes throughout the years (Page 2)

The Manager's Cabin, a life changing experience.(Page 3)

Friends of the Camp: Be involved. (Page 4)

Celebrate!! July 7-10, 2016 — 61 Years of Having Our Wonderful Camp, 60 years of programming.

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR CAMP COMMITTEE

Eagle River United Methodist Camp (SE)

Newsletter Number 2 November 7, 1997

WHAT HAPPENED THIS SUMMER? WHO DID IT?

The camp at times put out a newsletter for informational and marketing purposes

Do You Remember ? ? ?

Campers from Ketchikan at our first Camp, August 5-12, 1956

Juneau-Douglas Methodist Camp prepares for first camping season

Juneau, May 7, 1956

Plans for a full season at the Juneau Area Methodist Camp, located 29 miles from Juneau, are being developed rapidly, the program planning committee, which held its fourth meeting of the year Sunday at the Juneau Methodist Church reports. Organized as an offshoot of the General Camp Committee last January, the program planning committee is headed by Miss Claudia Kelsey and is composed of four sub-committees: family camp, budget finance, publicity & promotion, and program resources. Mrs. Jack Popejoy, chairman of the program resources, reported that Miss Kelsey had consented to act as dean of the Christian Adventure Camp for intermediates and senior boys and girls, to be held August 5 to 12. The Reverend Paul Caton, pastor of Mountain Point and Clover Pass churches, near Ketchikan, will serve as dean for the Junior Camp (fourth, fifth and sixth grades), August 12 to 19.

Mrs. John Argetsinger, chairman of budget finance, said that she had contacted Sturm Lockers, which will give the committee free locker service. "Contributions of wild meat, fish and surplus vegetables will aid substantially in defraying food costs for the work campers, as well as the program campers," Mrs. Argetsinger said and urged that it be publicized that the camp committee will gladly receive surplus food at any time.

As chairman of publicity and promotion, Miss Bea Shepard discussed plans for a camp promotion program, to be held at the Juneau Methodist Church at 7:30 p.m. May 8. It will be in the form of a campfire program, with stunts and singing by juniors, intermediates and seniors around a campfire.

John Argetsinger, general chairman of the camp facilities committee, under whose guidance the 84 acre campsite is being developed, reported that the second work camp from outside will get underway June 20 and run to August 1. The workcampers are college students who are recruited through the Methodist Student Movement. Of last year's group, six were from the states-at-large and six came from the Pacific Northwest.

Through the cooperative efforts of the work campers, laymen, youth and ministers of the Juneau and Douglas Methodist churches, the following buildings and facilities have been erected: four tent platforms with foundations for two others, a temporary cook-shack and dining room (permanent building but used temporarily for this purpose), storage warehouse, latrines, water system, cable ferry across Eagle River, bridge across Saturday Creek, a friendly circle begun for campfire and worship services, foundation started on permanent kitchen and dining hall, roads and trails cleared and graveled. Under terms of the U.S. Forest Service lease for the land, the facilities of the camp are to be made available for use by other groups in the area. Even though still very primitive, the camp was used last September for a very successful 4H Camp. Other groups are encouraged to contact members of the local committee for more information.

There was a camp newspaper read at evening campfire. This is part of page 1 of the first newspaper at the first camp. →

CHRISTIAN ADVENTURE CAMP NEWS

August 5 to 12, 1956

Juneau Area Methodist Camp at Eagle Riv

QUALITY OF ATTENDANCE AT CHRISTIAN ADVENTURE CAMP HIGHEST POSSIBLE

It was stated today by a person on the "inside" that the persons attending the Christian Adventure Camp August 5 to 1? were of the highest quality to be found anywhere. That the camp was a great success could be attributed to the work planning and cooperation of everyone who took part. Here's to an even better camp in 1957!

Persons attending this year's camp were
David Argetsinger 903 B St., Juneau
Marianne Argetsinger, 903 B, Juneau
Anne Brown Box 1116, Auke Bay
Bruce Carr Box 359, Ketchikan
Mary Caton 2524 First Ave., Ketchikan
Robert Clifton Box 554, Douglas
Judy Dafoe 836 Calhoun, Juneau
Sabra Ellis 1105 Millar, Ketchikan
Charleah Hattrick Box 2239, Ketchikan
Bobbie Haws 115 Anderson Way, Ketch.
Russell Hopkins Box 2702, Juneau
Bill Hynson Box 885, Juneau
Edwin Hynson Box 885, Juneau
Gail Meader Box 1435, Ketchikan
Don Poling Box 1447, Juneau
Patsy Popejoy 620 Seatter St., Juneau
Dale Rogers 3119 Tongass, Ketchikan
Dale Shuman Box 1263, Douglas
Dennis Shuman Box 1263, Douglas
Michael Tate 913 W. 11th, Juneau
Valerie Tatsuda 525 Grant, Ketchikan

Staff:
R. K. Heacock, Jr. 123 Fourth, Juneau
Claudia Kelsey Box 2072, Juneau
David Corner Box 175, Bothell, Wash.
Lucy Poling Box 1447, Juneau
John Poling Box 1447, Juneau
Ruth Popejoy 620 Seatter St., Juneau
Jim Ross Earlham College, Richmond, In
John Sandor Box 1928, Juneau
Bea Shepard Box 2072, Juneau
David Argetsinger and Edwin Hynson, Maintenance Men

(Jackie and Mitch Poling were also in camp part of the week.)

QUOTABLE QUOTES

Good night, Edwin!
Pass the wheat germ.

Remembrances from **Claudette Curtis**
April 13, 2020

When I first came to Juneau in 1962 I started going to the Juneau Methodist Church. My first experience with the camp was when I met Louise and John Argetsinger. One Saturday Louise asked me if I would like to go out and help do some work out at the camp. I had such a fun day.

I'm not positive when my next experience, but when Sandie Coon was Dean, she invited me to be a part of her team and I helped in the Kitchen. The VIM Team was here from Kansas. I continued to come to camp every year. I also helped with Nature.

I really wanted to try being a counselor, so the next year Sandie learned of my desire and asked me to be a counselor. I want to tell you something, it took me a long time to come down out of the clouds. It was one of the most wonderful experiences. I think I was a counselor for about seven years and I wouldn't change any part of those seven years.

All of the years I helped at camp I received more than I gave, believe me. I watched all those wonderful kids grow up and become CIT's and Counselors. I met many special VIMS. Like Leroy always said, "Thank God For VIMS,"

Bunti Reed wrote:

There are many opportunities to help at camp. Won't you join us in this valuable ministry? Share your gifts and talents. You can help campers see that God's hands are yours, theirs, and mine.

Thoughts from **Jo Anne Alter Hayden**, April 5, 2020

I believe that some of my early mental images are from hearing others talk about some of the earlier days and seeing a few pictures from those earlier days, before I was old enough to go to camp.

With two older brothers who were able to go to camp before I was old enough, I looked forward to being old enough to be able to go.

Though I can't say I have a lot of detailed memories of specific early camping times at camp, overall my memories are that it was a very special time at camp and certainly something that I looked forward to doing each year.

One year I remember being very disappointed when our family vacation had us out of town at the time of camp and so I wasn't able to go that year.

Obviously part of the camping experience included sleeping in a cabin, having caring adults who helped us participate in the activities, meals, and all around fun of camp.

Camp was another important piece of being nurtured by my Christian family as I grew - something extra special beyond regular weekly church and Sunday school - a bit more like Vacation Bible School - but even more special.

Comments from **Judy Maier**

March 29, 2020

My experience began in 1956 when I was one of 12 work campers from around the United States who had applied for the opportunity to help build the first building and had been selected.

Frank, a local who grew up on the Backloop Road was offered the position as builder and that made all the difference.

Judy attended graduate school in Eugene while Frank was completing his degree in architecture.

We slept in tents while the first building was built. The kitchen then moved into the tool shed closer to the river.

Three guys camped out until they had built the first of the 3 cabins we had constructed. After the road got pushed north past the camp these 3 cabins needed to be moved on-to the camp property on the east side of the road.

The camp would not have happened without John Argetsingers' building skills and Louise Argetsingers' cooking skills and their determination to get Juneau kids a church camp.

I love going out to camp for a shared Thanksgiving dinner. It is used by so many groups. It is very different than 1956.

Many eagles can be seen along the Juneau Auke Bay coastline where the camp is located.

Comments about **Mary Louse Hager by Debra Gerrish** March 27, 2020

Mary Louise was on either the first or second VIM team that worked at camp. She came up with her husband for years and years afterwards and often brought an entire VIM team with her to camp. They were very generous with funding projects there as well. She was very close to Bea and many stories resulted from her work with Judy Maier, who was on the first VIM team. The drama of camp is how it helps to shape young people.

Here is a page for your personal recollections from your church camp experiences:

Camp Skit #1 by Bea Shepard

It's Not Always Easy

Narrator: It was about 1952 or 3. We were looking for a camp site - a place where we could hold summer camps for the children and young people of the Methodist churches of Southeast Alaska. It was all because Mrs. Grant, a genuine pillar of the Douglas church, insisted that we needed one. Her daughter Louis had just joined the Baptist church in Juneau and Mrs. Grant said it was because the Baptists had a camp at about mile 18 on the Glacier Highway, and Louise had gone to that camp and was now a Baptist. Mrs. Grant was convinced that if we had had a camp her daughter would still be a Methodist. (??)

Bob Rings, pastor at Douglas, his wife DorothyAnn, and Claudia Kelsey and Bea Shepard had formed themselves into a camp-search committee, and were scouring the country around Juneau, looking for a suitable place.

Here they are, holding an informal meeting on the subject.

Bob: I say, we may as well give up. There's no place with enough flat land, that has qualities suitable for a camp!

Bea: Well, when you are living in a rain forest, it's hard to find any flat land that isn't a real jungle. I'm tired of plowing through Devil's club!

Dorothy Ann: I suppose if you found a big enough piece of flat land, you could cut the trees and clear it of Devil's club.

(Another man, Fred McGinnis, pastor of Juneau Methodist Church, comes in and listens.)

Bea: I'd be happy to cut down a bunch of Devil's Club. But the trees are something else. Everywhere we go are these huge old trees! We'd need pros to cut down those trees.

Bob: Well, it's all Forest Service land, anyway. They wouldn't let us cut down the trees.

Fred: I just came hunting for you to tell you I think I've found the spot for you!

Everybody: You have? Where? Tell us about it!

Fred: I was out on the 95 footer - Coast Guard boat. (The Captain is a member of our church and he asked me to go with them on this trip.) Out beyond the Boy Scout Camp, we came on a place that looks very good for a camp. I asked Dick if we could land there and look it over and he said, "Why not?" So we did. You really should go out and look at it.

Everybody: How do we go out there?

Fred: I suppose maybe you go out the way the Scouts go to their camp.

Bea: I think the Scouts go to the end of the road and go across a foot bridge and then hike a couple miles.

Claudia: They take their supplies in by boat.

Bob: Where do they start on the boat? Amalga Harbor? I guess we can ask them.

Fred: Something's wrong with this idea. If you are at Scout camp, you have Eagle River between you and the area I'm talking about. I think you ought to go out and explore a bit. There must be some way to get there. The army used it during the war.

Narrator: Bob did a lot of exploring, looking at maps and talking to people. Finally, he thought he knew enough about it that we might be able to go out and look at the site. Here is the camp search committee getting out of the car at the end of the Herbert River Road.

DorothyAnn: Is the camp site on the other side of Eagle River?

Bob: Yes.

DorothyAnn: That means there are two rivers between us and the site. So what are we doing here?

Bob: Well, just look over there!

Claudia: It looks like a bridge!

Bob: Yep. It's a bridge.

Bea: But there's a cable padlocked across the bridge. Obviously we're not supposed to use it.

Bob: No, we're not supposed to use it to drive our car across it. The padlocked cable is meant to keep people from doing that. But I got permission for us to walk across it.

Claudia: Is there another one across Eagle River.

Bob: Actually, there is one a couple miles up the river. But they say it's not in as good condition as this one and they don't recommend we try to use it. So we just walk through here till we come to Eagle River and then see if we can get across. They walk along, commenting on things they see.

Dorothy Ann: This is a regular old road. And look! Isn't that an old school bus parked there?

Bob: It sure looks like one. But I don't think much of this as a road.

D Ann: Well, it is pretty muddy.

Bea: I know where we are now! I've heard a little bit about it We're walking through the Satko homestead.

Bob: Who's Satko?

Bea: Have you heard about the Ark?

Bob: You mean Noah and the Ark?

Bea: No. I mean Satko's Ark.

Claudia: I've heard about the Ark, but what does this place have to do with it?

Bea: Satko lived in Oklahoma. He built a boat, and when it was finished he loaded it on a truck and drove the truck, filled with his family, to Seattle. When they got there, they put the boat in the water, and it actually floated. So they started putting things in it to sail it to Alaska.

Claudia: Is this going to be another of your long stories?

D Ann: I want to hear the rest of it.

Bea: I'll try to make it short. The Coast Guard saw the boat and insisted on inspecting it. They said it was not seaworthy and that Satko was not to take it out of the harbor, period. So one night when nobody was looking, Satko put his family in the boat and they set sail for Alaska. And they made it. I have a picture that Ruth Pope joy took of the boat as it docked in Juneau Small Boat Harbor.

Claudia: Well, what does that have to do with this place out here?

Bea: Satko sailed the boat out here to Amalga Harbor - and actually wrecked it on the beach just below Governor Ernest Gruening's cabin. But the family came over here at the end of Herbert River Road and took up a homestead between the two rivers.

D Ann: You said they had some children?

Bea: Yes, they had several, all school age. So Satko went in to the School people and said, "I want the school bus to come out and pick up my kids!" Finally, the School District decided to hire Mrs. Satko as a school bus driver and furnish her a bus and she took them in to school every day.

Bob: Oh, oh. Is that where they lived? See those logs over there?

Bea: I understand that they built a log cabin to live in. Somebody said that Satko was quite a slave driver with his kids - got a lot of work out of them. That's probably what's left of the log cabin.

D Ann: None of them live here now?

Bea: I understand that a couple of the children - grown up, now, of course, - do live in Juneau.

Claudia: Look! This must be their garden! All kinds of things are still growing here. Look at the Strawberries and raspberries, ----------!!

Bob: And the road comes out at Eagle River. Now the question is: How do we get across?

Narrator: How do you suppose they got across Eagle River? (Take a few minutes to consider this --)

Crossing the River:

Claudia: Look! the river is shallow! We could probably wade across it. I never thought this would be possible!

Bob: We're lucky! I thought we might be. We've had a few days without any rain, and the weather has been cool, so the Glaciers aren't apt to be melting. Let's try wading.

DAnn: I've heard that wading this river is deceptive. The water is cold and full of silt and the current is very swift.

Bob: Well, I wore my boots and I think the river is low enough that the water won't come up over them. I'll carry you over, one at a time, piggy back. Dorothy Ann, you are first.

Bea: I think I'll try wading. I'm wearing tennis shoes. The water can run right through them, and if I'm careful. I think I can make it.

Claudia: I think I'll try wading. too. OOOOH! That water is coold! It feels like it's right off of the glacier.

Bob (as he carries DAnn across) Well. it IS right off the Glacier!

Bea: That current is really swift. It could knock you over pretty easily. And COLD!!

Claudia: My feet are getting numb.

Bea: We'd better hurry - carefully, that is. As soon as we get to the other side we can jump up and down and get the feeling back in our feet.

Everybody: We made it!

Bea: So what? Where are we? Look at that bank of Devil's Club! We might as well have stayed on the other side!

Bob: Over there to the left it looks like a thin place where we can get through the devil's club. Yeah --- not too bad.

Bea: Oh look over there! Look at those mountains!

Claudia: Those must be the Chilkats.

Bea: Coming down from Haines? Wow! This is a wonderful spot! Here's a big clearing - all the way from here to the Channel, I think. But what are these crazy holes and bumps? It looks like a bunch of kids were out here practicing digging holes.

Bob: This must be where the army grew their potatoes. I understand they grew potatoes for all the army bases in the area - here, Duck Creek, and Port Chilkoot.

Bea: Well, all I have to say is, if we can figure out how to get over here, we've found a campsite!

Narrator: Our intrepid adventurers made it back across the river and went in to town to report what they had seen. On the basis of what they reported, John Argetsinger, Chair of Trustees of the Juneau Church, took it on himself to go to the Forest Service and obtain a permit for the churches to use the land for a camp. The Forest Service drew up a permit for the churches to use 88 acres of the land, at a permit cost of $41 a year. The Forest Service wanted to be kept informed of what we were doing with the land, and they didn't want us to cut any trees without their approval, but mostly their rules and regulations were pretty much what we would have wanted, too. The only problem was how to get across Eagle River.

Cast: Narrator, Bob, Bea, Dorothy Ann, Fa
Claudia

Camp Skit #2 by Bea Shepard

The time is middle of June 1955.

Location a muddy trail some 28 miles north of Juneau Alaska.

Characters: 12 - 15 college age young people, all carrying good-sized packs and sleeping bags; one middle-aged woman who turned out to be the leader of the college kids; one youngish "middle-age" man carrying a fairly heavy tool-box; one woman in middle-30s carrying a machete.

It is raining --- HARD!

The college students and leader came in by plane a short time ago, but they have already made the decision to call the man in charge of the project who met them at the airport, Mr. A., rather than struggle with his name, Argetsinger.

Mr A: Sometimes we drive across that old bridge that we came over back there, and drive through to Eagle River. But this trail is pretty muddy today - And we have had quite a lot of experience getting our cars stuck. --

J.D. Is this supposed to be a road? After all, that was a pretty good bridge when it was built.

Jan: Is it okay to drive across it? All the signs say Keep Off, This means YOU! Bridge Unsafe!! And so on ----

Mr. A: The bridge is all right for our kind of use. It wouldn't hold up under heavy traffic. But it was never intended to be used for lots of cars. There was a sort of road going upstream, and across to Eagle River, where there was another bridge. But that bridge is now in much worse shape than this one.

J D: Why were the bridges there?

Mr. A: There was a mine a few miles up the trail on the other side of Eagle River.

J D: What's the name of the river we just crossed?

Mr. A: Herbert River.

Judy: Was that an old abandoned school bus just this side of the bridge?

Mr. A: Yes. That's evidently the one Mrs. Satko used.

Judy: And who is Mrs Satko?

Mr. A.: Frank, you knew the Satkos. Tell us about them.

Frank: Okay. The Satkos were from Oklahoma. It's a long story, but I'll tell you all of it some other time. Mr. Satko built a boat in Oklahoma, put it on a truck and brought it to Seattle. They put it in the water, the whole family got on board, and they came up to Juneau. They homesteaded this land that we are walking on. Mr. Satko went in and asked for the school bus to come out here for his children. It was a big family. The school Board finally decided to hire Mrs. Satko as a school bus driver. They gave her a school bus, and she took the kids in each morning and went back for them in the afternoon.

Judy: Did they go all the way in to Juneau?

Frank: No. There was a small school then, in Tee Harbor, about ten miles from here. They went there.

J D: How much further do we have to walk? I'm getting pretty wet!

Paul Wet is right! I thought you said it didn't rain very hard in Juneau! I'd say this is hard rain!

Mr. A: Yes, I said that, and I meant it. This is just about the hardest rain I've ever seen in Juneau, in all the years I've lived here. But we're almost there.

J D: Oh. There's the river. But where is the bridge?

Mr. A: The bridge I mentioned is a couple miles up the river. But we have a different way to get across.

Frank: It's different, all right! Mr. A. came up with a really great idea of how to cross the river. --- See it tied up over there?

J D: Well, I see something all right. But what is it?

Frank: It's a ferry. It's made of planks fastened to a bunch of old oil barrels. There's a cable tied off on both sides of the river, and we pull ourselves across by the cable.

Which they do ----------

J D; Well, O.K. Here we are. But where's the camp??

Mrs. Leader: Don't you remember? We signed up for six weeks to build the camp!

J D: Yes. i remember that. But aren't there any buildings? -- We're really getting quite wet. --- Where do we put all our stuff? Where do we sleep?

Mr. A. Sorry! There's only one building on the property, and it's a tool shed - full of tools and materials for you to work with. Frank, here, is your construction foreman, and he'll tell you what to do.

Alan: Wait a minute! You said there's only one building??? How about a bathroom??

Frank: Oh, there is one outhouse fairly near to the tool shed.

J D: Well, there goes that hot shower!

Alan: I'm beginning to understand why you guys suggested we use the restrooms before we left the airport.

Frank: Okay. The first thing we'll do is fix a place to put all your stuff. We have a couple big tarps. We'll nail one end of one of them to the roof of the toolshed, pound in a few stakes, and pull the tarp over, fastning it to the stakes - making a kind of awning. We'll put the other tarp on the ground under the awning and you can put all your stuff there.

Alan: O.K., now. Are we going back into town to sleep? or What?

Frank: No. We're going to build a sleeping place for you to sleep in tonight.

J D: Build one! Hey! I'm working my way through college doing construction, but I'm not so sure we can build a place like that before we go to bed tonight!

Frank: You can. We'll put in a log foundation, put a floor on it, build a frame, mainly of 2 x 4s, put the tent over the frame. We have a bunch of metal cots - army surplus - but they're in town, waiting for places to put them. After we get the tents put together, we'll bring the cots out. Each tent will hold 6 to 8 cots.

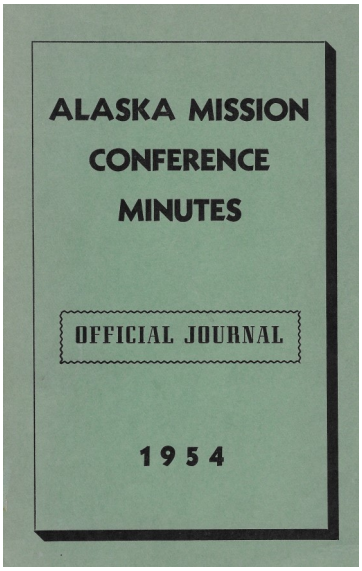
Alan: Tonight????

Frank: Oh. Tonight you can probably just throw out your sleeping bags. Actually, if we get one frame put together, the girls can sleep in there and you guys can put your sleeping bags on the tarp beneath the awning.

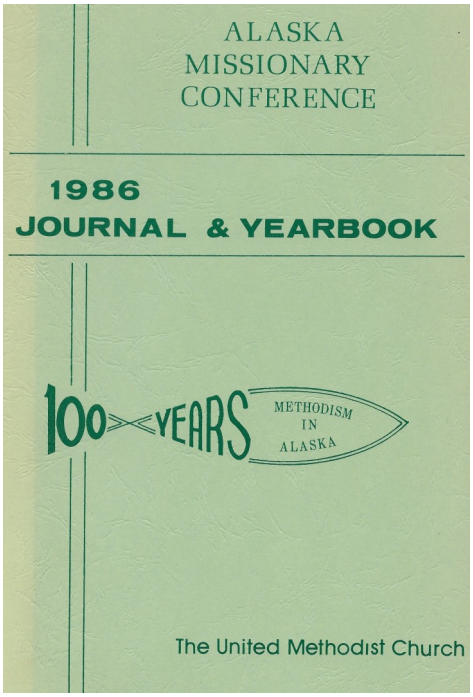
Alan: Yeah - while you go home to a nice warm bed.

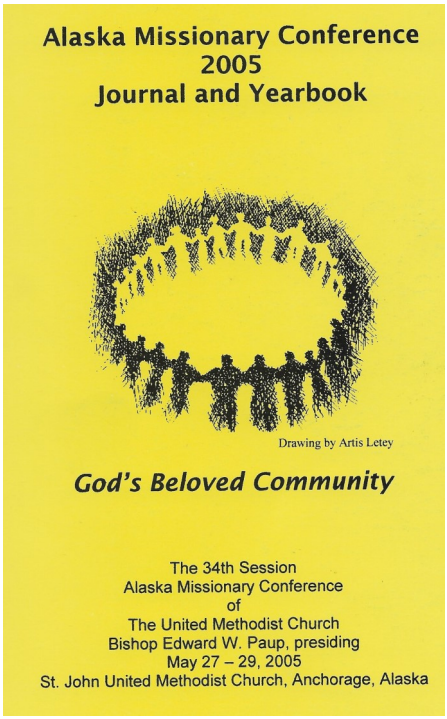
Narrator:

When they came we had 88 acres of land. When they left, we had a camp!



Text that follows is mostly from the AUMC Yearly Journal/Yearbooks





The Beginnings

Perhaps one of the most worthwhile portions of the Christian education program of the church is in the field of camping. Here we seek to teach our young people to learn to live together as Christians. It is in camp that many young people dedicate themselves to full-time Christian service and many Christian homes find their beginning.

In **1955** the Alaska Commission on Camps was established by The Alaska Mission for the following purposes:

1. To set the policy for standards of camping in accordance with the standards of the American Camping Association and the Board of Education of The Methodist Church.

2. To determine the number and location of camp sites.

3. To supervise the development, equipping and maintenance of the various camps, working with Area Camp Committees [Southeastern Alaska; Western Alaska]. {The North Central Harding Lake program was initiated for the Fairbanks/Nome Region in 1967 (which had been Presbyterian) – editor}.

4. To be responsible for receiving, holding and distributing the funds earmarked for camp developments and improvements.

5. To work in cooperation with and to be responsible to the Division of National Missions and the Alaska Mission Conference.

6. To delegate responsibility to the various Area Camp Committees as need arises.

The 1955 Conference Camp Commission was composed of:

June Marks, Co-Chairman

John Argetsinger, Co-Chairman

Rev. Gene Elliott

Elbert Grosskopf

William Foster

Donn Lee

James McGiffin, from National

Bonneau Murphy

In August of 1955, a 14 page booklet of suggested organizational procedures was prepared by Mr. McGiffin (Director of Youth Work for Outposts). During the year this booklet has been used by the Commission as the basis for developing the best possible structure to deal with the unique needs and opportunities of Methodist camping in Alaska.

The following recommendations were made:

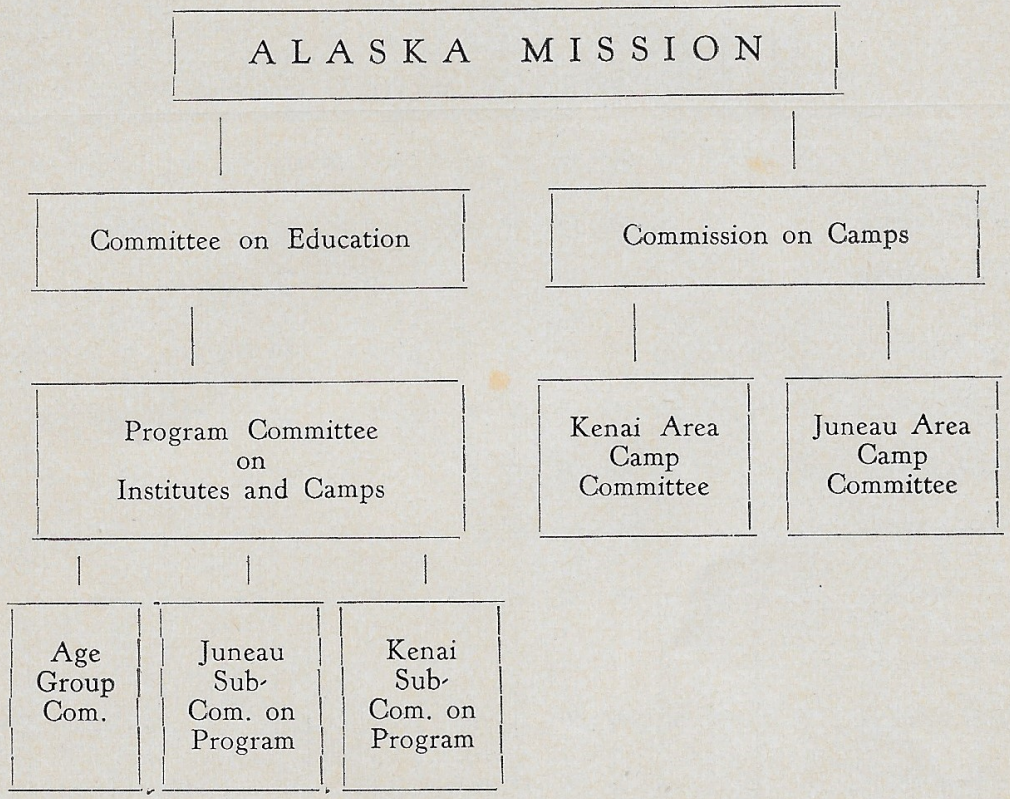
1. The Commission on Camps would hereafter be responsible to and function as a committee of the Commission on Education.

2. The official name be changed from Commission on Camps to Committee on Camping.

3. The same responsibilities and functions would apply as before and include programming, leadership and other aspects.

The Committee on Camping adopted the suggestions and recommendations of Miss Elizabeth Brown and Mr. James McGiffin.

Camp Organization



Membership

Chairman
Chairman of Program Committee
Chairman of Juneau Area Camp Committee
Chairman of Kenai Area Camp Committee
Person representing FAIRBANKS
Person representing ANCHORAGE
Superintendent of the MISSION
Division of National Missions Representative (ex-officio)

OTHERS AS DEEMED NECESSARY

Responsibilities

1. Set policy of camping in line with national standards.
2. Selection and development of camping site, equipping and maintenance.
3. Responsible for the distribution of camp funds.

This Commission should work in cooperation with and be responsible to the Alaska Mission Conference and the Division of National Missions.

This Commission may delegate responsibility to area level camp committees or other committees as needed.

By 1956 the camping program in Alaska was moving steadily forward and was making increasing progress in relating the camping program to the larger field of Christian education with the best help from the Board of Education in Nashville and the Methodist Camp Department. They were attempting to build slowly but wisely and well.

Western Alaska Commission on Camps Chairman Richard K. Heacock, Jr. said in the 1956 Journal that "There are unlimited possibilities for camping in Alaska to be used as an important means of developing in our children, youth and adults the consciousness of the world as God's Creation, man as a steward of all that God has made, and the development of a deeper understanding of others as fellow members of His Family. We sincerely hope that our efforts will help in making these possibilities come true."

The 1956 Pastor's School suggested that every local church make every possible use of available campsites and other convenient locations for planning retreats by the Committee on Education, church school workers, official boards, Methodist Youth Fellowships (M.Y.F.) groups, and other organizations.

In 1955 the engineer members at the Juneau Methodist Church built a foot-bridge over Eagle River to the camp area. Not long afterwards, the bridge was washed out. So the engineers decided to replace the bridge, which could wash out frequently, with a ferry.

The platform was made from lumber, which was placed on empty oil barrels. A cable was placed across the river which was used to pull the ferry across.

Many people from both churches spent many hours clearing the land and building facilities.

1954 had seen steady growth of the camping program of the Methodist Church in Alaska. The Section of Church Extension approved a $14,000 grant to be divided between the Southeastern and Kenai Peninsula camp sites and used for camp development. The Pacific Northwest Conference sent a work camper team to the Territory to work on construction of buildings, etc. An architect, Mr. Lynn Forrest of Juneau, was secured to work on the master plan. The Camp Consultant of the Methodist Church, Miss Elizabeth Brown of Nashville, Tennessee, was invaluable to the camping committee on suggestions for the master plans, buildings, camping standards, etc.

The committee for the Youth camp in Southeastern Alaska has concerned itself this year with the following activities:

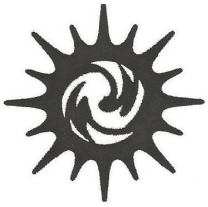
- Clearing the "lease-permit" with the United States Forest Service for the 77 acre tract of land about 30 miles north of Juneau for development purposes.
- Building an access bridge to the site. Laymen from the Juneau Methodist church have been responsible for constructing this bridge valued at about $7,000. All labor on the bridge was volunteer and the materials cost only $100 to $200.
- Planning orders and materials lists for supplies looking forward to the "work campers" from the Pacific Northwest Conference of Methodist Church. Work is underway in the local churches and at the site in preparation for the coming of the work camp group.

No camping programs are in planning stages at the present although projected plans may

permit some camping on the site the last part of the summer.

We rejoice in reporting about $8,000 will be expended for the improvement of the site for this year.

Respectfully submitted by June Marks and Fred McGinnis, co-chairs of the Youth Camp Committee



From the Alaska Mission Conference Minutes Official Journal 1955, page 65:

John Argetsinger, Chairman of the Juneau-Douglas Camp Committee, provided the following summary of the official report to the Juneau -Douglas Methodist Camp Committee for 1954:

During the past year substantial progress has been made in the establishment of a Methodist church camp on the Eagle River, 29 miles north of Juneau for the use of adults and youth in Southeast Alaska.

Highlights of the past year's accomplishments include obtainment of U.S. Forest Service permits for the camping area, trail clearing, completion of latrines/sanitary facilities, a general purpose building with kitchen and dining facilities, storage building, water well, ferry, six tent platforms, a worship center, a kitchen garden, and the purchase of equipment.

A total of 84 acres is included in the area for the camp.

One weekend camp was held for a combined youth group from Juneau and Douglas churches under the leadership of Mr. and Mrs. Bernie Bennett of Douglas with 18 attending.

Six boys and six girls and counselor, Mrs. Erwin Harris, from a college in the states, continued with the development program.

The proposed budget for this year's expenditures is $7,160, which will be apportioned to obtaining equipment, material, transportation, rentals, and operation of the camp.

It is estimated that the present valuation of structures at the camp at the beginning of this new year of construction is $1,900. Last year's expenditures total $3,379, and inventory totaled $2,111.

1956:

In order that good foundations might be established for the future of camping in Alaska under the Alaska Mission, the Commission requested Mr. James McGiffin to prepare a study of Alaska camping needs and problems and make recommendations regarding the organization and function of the Commission.

It has become a principle of the Commission that the purposes and the contemplated program should dictate the nature of the camp sites and facilities.

Therefore, it has seemed absolutely necessary that the question of "What is it that we are trying to do in our Methodist Camping Program?" be answered first of all.

To this end, Miss Elizabeth Brown of the Board of Education and Mr. James McGiffin were invited to be present with the Commission during this conference. Workshops on camping have been held during the Pastors' School on "Camping in the Program of The Methodist Church".

Through cooperative thinking and study, the members of the Commission present

came to a more complete understanding of the importance and goals in "living together as Christians in the out-of-doors". Through these workshops, also, the relationship of camping to the larger business of Christian Education (including Church School Classes, Vacation Church School, Methodist Youth Fellowship, Assemblies, Institutes, etc.) was noted.

As a result of the study of the Commission through the year and the workshops last week and the summary findings of the Commission this week, the Commission is ready to make some important recommendations to the Mission.

Recommendations:

That camping be recognized as a part of the total educational concern of the Alaska Mission: and that the Commission on Camps hereafter be responsible *to* and function as a committee of the Commission on Education.

That as a part of the Commission on Education the official name be changed from "Commission on Camps" to "Committee on Camping".

That under· the Commission on Education, the Committee on Camping be given the same responsibilities and functions as the Commission on Camps has had heretofore. In addition, that the Committee on Camps be responsible for programming, leadership, and other aspects of Methodist camping in Alaska in cooperation with the Division of National Missions.

That Mr. James McGiffin be requested to make specific suggestions concerning organizational relationships within the Commission on Education and the Committee on Camping and any other suggestions that will expedite the camping program in Alaska.

Camp Council — 1956 Christian Adventure camp

Dale Shuman, Dale Rogers, Bill Hynson,
Marianne Argetsinger, Claudia Kelsey, mary Caton.

Theme - Each for All

Rev. Dick Heacock, Jr., Ruth Popejoy, Claudia Kelsey, Dave Corning

Edwin Hynson with David Argetsinger

1956:

The Southeastern Area Camp Planning Committee, with Miss Claudia Kelsey as Chair, provided careful planning, staffing, publicity and preparation for the summer, with a Christian Adventure Camp for August 5-12, and a Junior Camp for August 12-19th.

Two more tent platforms were built during a work camp with young people from the States. Construction of a 1,000 gallon water tank, and work on Saturday Creek Bridge were also part of the summer work session.

1957:

In so far as it has been possible, the suggestions and recommendations resulting from the council of Miss Elizabeth Brown and Mr. James McGiffin have been implemented. In line with the recommendations that these experts gave us last year, the following specific suggestions were presented:

I. Develop two Methodist camps-Southeastern and Western Area.

2. These will serve the selected few who will in turn serve others.

3. Continually re-think the situation.

4. As we develop these camps, press to completion a master plan for the camps. Evaluate the sketch for the main structure and use

simplicity so it may be carried out in all the buildings.

At a meeting of this session a new committee has been created and tube duties and limitations defined. This committee is the Juneau Area Camp Development Committee, with the following powers:

Duties:

1. Study the building needs and submit recommendations to this committee.

2. Prepare an estimated cost of the proposed improvements.

3. Development and finance plans to be submitted to the District Superintendent, Chairman of the Committee on Camping, Camp Department of the Board of Education, and Dr. B. P. Murphy simultaneously for consideration and approval.

Limitations:

1. No plan may be used if there is any major objection from the four advisory groups above until revised satisfactorily.

2. No financial obligation may be made against funds of the Alaska Mission, Division of National Missions, or this committee, unless funds are in hand or written commitment for the funds is given.

The committee requests $750 for the Camp budget for 1957-58. The money is to be divided with $300 going to each of the two area camps with the instructions to each treasurer that any unused funds will be returned to the General Treasurer of the Alaska Mission and a report submitted to the Commission on World Service and Finance.

Juneau-Douglas Camp:

A very full and complete report from the chairman of the Camp Committee was received from John Argetsinger of Juneau. To quote from his opening statement, he says:

"In 1956 the Methodist Camp at Eagle River

reached an important point in its development in that it was placed in full use for the

intended purpose of church camping. In addition we were fortunate to again have an Alaska Methodist Work Camp for six weeks so that the development of the physical facilities continued in a substantial way."

A complete inventory was submitted and a recommendation as to the steps and expenditures needs in the immediate future for further development. The estimated need was $795. The recommendation is being considered and steps set in motion to secure the funds, 1f possible, from the Division Youth Work Funds.

To quote again from his excellent report, Mr. Argetsinger says,

"Our record shows the camp facilities were used by a total of 149 adult and youth campers with a total of 877 camper days. In addition to this in-residence camping, there were numerous picnic parties and other visitors to the area. With the addition of the Alaska Work Campers, the camp was occupied for more than ten weeks."

This is indeed a very fine program of service and growth. A resume of the report will be submitted as a supplement. The leadership of that committee is greatly appreciated.

The challenge of the Christian Education program thru camping in Alaska is still very great and the value to the Youth which have been able to participate is without measure. The Youth program in this Conference thru this means has hardly been tapped and only as we are able to develop facilities, leadership, and planning will we be in a position to have the impact upon young lives which our Church should have.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Heacock, Chairman

Wayne Hull**,** Secretary

B. Supplemental Report

Summary of Report of Juneau-Douglas Camp Committee Report for 1956.

A Christian Adventure Camp including seniors was held August 5·12 with 21 young people and 9 staff members. Eight of the young people were from Ketchikan, 14 from the Douglas church and 8 from Juneau.

A Junior Camp was held August 12-19 with 23 juniors and 9 staff members. Claudia Kelsey was director of the Christian Adventure Camp and Ed Stanton of Douglas of the Junior Camp. Two college students from the Alaska Work Camp remained in Juneau to help with the camp program.

The camp site is available for use by other groups at a very modest fee of 50 cents per camper per day. The Lutheran Church of Juneau conducted a 5-day camp July 30 to August 4 with 45 campers and 4 staff members.

A 4-H Club camp was held August 20•24 with 27 campers and 5 staff members. The total of camp use for this year amounts to 149 youth and adult campers with a total of 877 camper days. In addition, much use was made of the facilities by picnic parties and visitors to the area.

Including the Alaska Work Camp, the camp was occupied for more than ten weeks. The work camp consisted of 12 college young people and 2 counselors who worked on the camp facilities under the direction of a foreman provided by the camp committee for 6 weeks beginning June 18.

Local church members also contributed time and energy to the project to a total of 415 man hours.

Proposed developments for the year 1957 include construction of permanent platforms for 2 more tents, installation of the 1000-gallon wood water tank now on hand, a concrete pump platform at the well, completion of kitchen foundations, construction of trussed beams for the kitchen building, and installation of the gas refrigerator now stored in Juneau. Budget estimate for this work is $795.

Financial statement for January 1, 1956 to December 31, 1956:

On hand, December 31, 1956 $294.04

Total valuation of structures $14, 790.00

Total inventory of materials, equipment, and tools $5,528.00

Campers with Rev. John Shaffer 1960s

1958:

Camping

For several years the Committee on Camping, formerly the Commission on Camping, has been concerned with the task of developing a workable and satisfactory organization that would best carry forward the Methodist camping program in Alaska. A carefully compiled booklet of suggestions was made available to the committee by Mr. James McGiffin. Miss Elizabeth Brown and Mr. McGiffin led a workshop on camping at the 1956 conference session

which was held in Fairbanks. Experiences of the persons working in the Methodist camping programs in Southeastern and Western Alaska have been also a part of the committee considerations in developing organizational plans. In fact, our planning has begun and ended with experiences and needs.

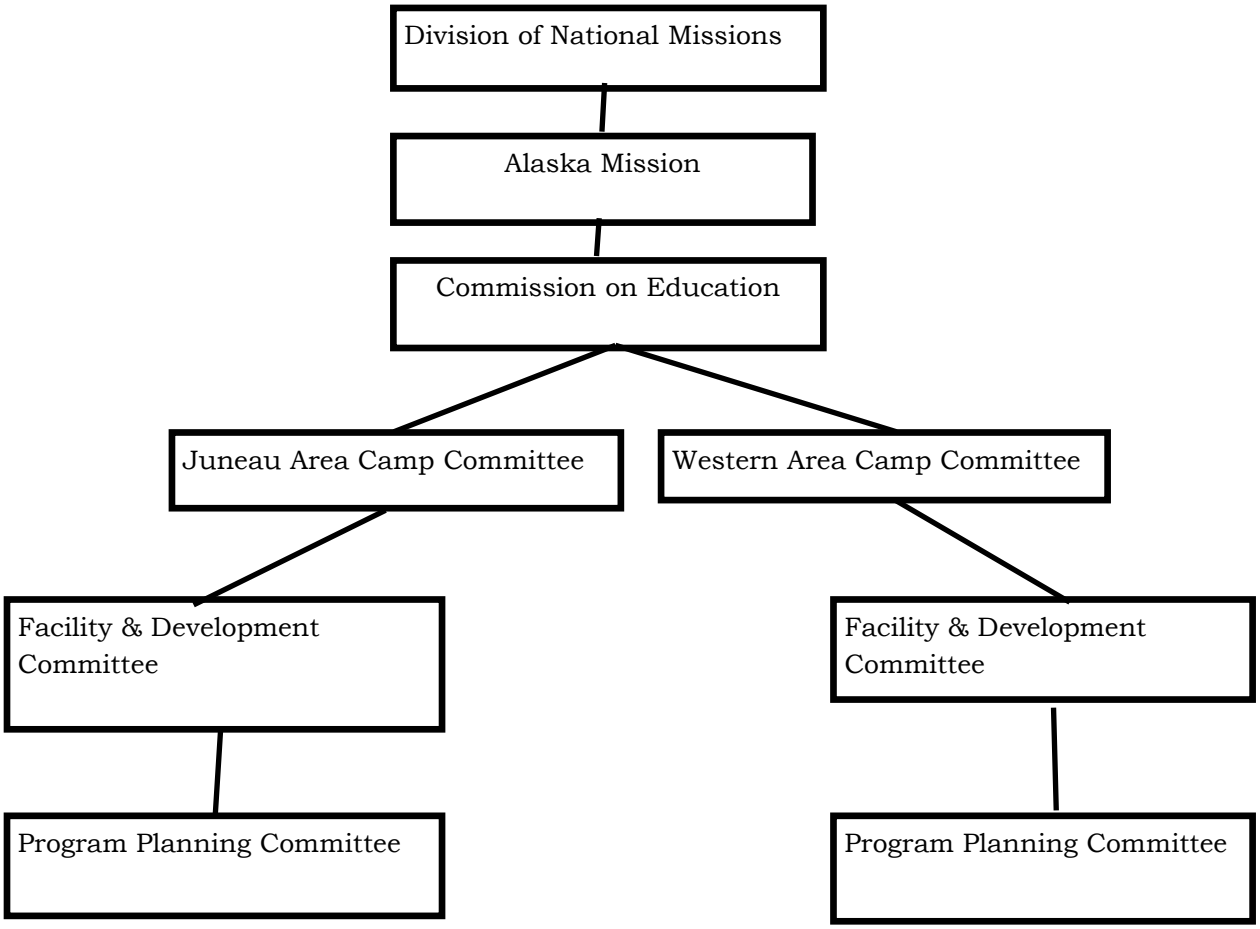
Out of experiences and study come the following recommendations:

1. ORGANIZATION:

It is recommended that from henceforth the work of this Committee on Camping of the Commission on Education be delegated to two area committees which shall be responsible to the Commission on Education of the Alaska Mission and the Division of National Missions of the Methodist Church. They are to be known as the "Juneau Area Camp Committee" and the "Western Area Camp Committee".

Each area committee is to have two subcommittees to be known as "Camp Facility and Development Committee" and "Program

Planning Committee". The relationships are to be as diagrammed:



[in a report by Chairman Richard E. Bruner for 1958 he writes that clarification was needed for the organization of the camp. The rewritten text is as follows:

The Area Camp Committee Chairman shall be elected by the Conference Commission on Education. He shall keep the official Camp Area File. The Camp Area Committee shall be composed of the Chairman and 4 representatives of each Sub-Committee (Facility and Development; and Program Planning).

The Area Committee shall report to the Conference Commission on Education and the Division of National Missions annually for the Camp Facility Development and Program in the Area.

Meetings of the Area Committee shall be an annual meeting for receiving Sub-Committee reports, election of officers (Vice-chairman, Secretary, Treasurer(s), and 2 representatives Conference Commission on Education.

Other meetings will be held at the call of the Superintendent of the Alaska Mission, Conference Commission on Education Chairman, or the Area Camp Committee Chairman.

The Sub-committees shall be self-perpetuating, electing their own officers and replacing such people as have left the Sub-committee. Each Sub-Committee shall elect 4 representatives to the Area Camp Committee.

Copies of the minutes of all Area and Sub-committee meetings shall be sent to the Chairman of the Conference Commission on Education and the Superintendent of the Alaska Mission.

Rev. Bill Trudeau playing a stick game with a camper

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE AREA CAMP COMMITTEE(S):

It shall be the responsibility of the Area Camp Committee(s) to oversee the camping program by:

a. Adopting a policy for camping in accordance with the standards of the American Camping Association;

b. Supervising the development, equipping, maintenance and management of the camp;

c. Being responsible, through its treasurer or treasurers, for the receiving and distributing of funds;

d. Being responsible to the Alaska Mission Commission on Education and the Division of National Missions, and by delegating responsibilities to its sub-committees or persons so designated.

Should concerns arise in areas of program or facilities which are not otherwise covered herein, authority is vested in the area committee to make necessary decisions by 2/3 majority vote

pending the next meeting of the Commission on Education. Matters pertaining to policy or other items unable to be resolved should be referred to the Commission on Education.

e. The Area Camp Committee(s) shall be the official representative of the Division of National Missions in its area. An authorization letter designating official responsibilities from the Division of National Missions shall be filed with the Secretary of the Committee.

MEETINGS:

The Area Camp Committee shall hold an annual meeting of all of the members of the Facility and Development sub-committee and the Program Planning sub-committee to elect a chairman, a secretary and treasurer (s) as well as four representatives of each sub-committee (the secretary and treasurers may be selected from these four). The chairman and four representatives from each sub-committee along with the chairman of the Area Camp Committee shall constitute the membership of the Area Camp Committee. The respective sub-committees shall be empowered to fill any vacancies as they occur.

The Area Camp Committee shall prepare an annual report and carry on such other business as is necessary. Other meetings of this Committee shall be held when deemed necessary at the call of the Chairman or at the request of the majority of the members of either of the two sub-committees.

OFFICERS:

The Area Camp Committee shall nominate to the Commission on Education for election its own chairman (except for the first year, when the Chairman is appointed by the Commission on Education); a vice chairman, a secretary and one or more treasurers. The secretary is to be responsible for the keeping of the minutes of the meetings and in cooperation with the chairman to prepare an annual report. The secretary shall also receive and file reports from the sub-committees.

The treasurer(s) shall receive and disburse funds for the development of the Camp and the camping program on authorization of Committee action. He shall also file an annual report. The secretary and treasurer(s) shall

send all reports to the Chairman of the Commission on Education, the Supt. of the

Alaska Mission, and the representative of the Division of National Missions.

The Supt. of the Alaska Mission and one representative of the Division of National Missions shall be ex-officio members of the Area Camp Committee(s).

REPORT OF LAST YEAR'S CAMPING PROGRAMS: JUNEAU AREA:

1. Facility and Development: The major improvement in facilities was the erection of an elevated 1000-gallon wood stave water tank. This replaces the temporary steel barrels used for two years. The tank was erected by six volunteer laborers from the Juneau Church who donated a total of 145 hours with a value of $470. The value of the completed installation is $1,900. Total valuation of structures at the camp is now $16,300. Inventoried materials, equipment, and tools are valued at $5,587, giving a total camp valuation of $21,887 as of December 31, 1957.

The appreciation of this committee is extended to Mr. John Argetsinger, Chairman, and his development committee for their excellent program of facility development and the 1957 report compiled by the Chairman which was distributed as a supplement to this report. In addition to the construction and volunteer labor listed above, 17 volunteers provided 1921 hours during the year to prepare the camp for use, do repair work, and close the camp for winter. This labor is valued at $465. The estimated budget for 1958 facility and development work is $2,650.

2. Program: Two camps were carried out last summer under the direction of the program committee, Miss Claudia Kelsey, Chairman. There were 30 campers and staff members in attendance at each camp for a total of 211 camper days at the Christian Adventure Camp and 200 camper days at the Junior Camp. The quality of these camps in staffing and program was excellent. This year Rev. Edmund B. Stanton of Douglas was elected Chairman of the program committee. He was also elected Director of the Christian Adventure Camp. Miss Claudia Kelsey was elected Director of the Junior Camp for 1958. Because of small numbers involved, the Seniors will again be included as a separate discussion group within the Christian Adventure Camp. In addition to Methodist camps last summer, there were camping groups from the local Baptist Church, Church of Christ, and Lutheran

Church. There were also 115 days of family and group camping by Methodists and both Girl Scout and Boy Scout groups overnighted in the area on several occasions. An additional 198 persons attended the camp for picnics and one-day outings.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard K. Heacock, Jr., Chairman

H. Wayne Hull, Secretary

The lodge in winter, photo from Rev. John J. Shaffer

1959: Camping

The Commission has recognized that certain changes needed to be made in the Conference Journal, 1958, Page 45 in order to clarify a very vague and general outline of the organization of the two Area Camp Committees. The proposed wording change would be for Paragraph 3 and 44 of Section II... Camping" and as follows:

The Area Camp Committee Chairmen shall be elected by the Conference Commission on Education. He shall keep the official Camp Area File. The Area Camp Committee shall be composed of the Chairman and 4 representatives of each Sub-Committee (Facility and Development; and Program Planning). The Area Committee shall report to the Conference Commission on Education and the Division of National Missions annually for the Camp Facility Development and Program in the Camp Area.

Meetings of the Area Committee shall be: an annual meeting for receiving Sub Committee reports, election of officers (Vice-chairman, Secretary, Treasurer(s)), and 2 representatives to the Conference Commission on Education. Other meetings will be held at the call of the Superintendent of the Alaska Mission, Conference Commission on Education Chairman, or the Area Camp Committee Chairman.

The Sub-committees shall be self-perpetuating, electing their own officers and replacing such people as have left the Sub-committee. Each Subcommittee shall elect 4 representatives to the Area Camp Committee.

Copies of the minutes of all Area and Subcommittee meetings shall be sent to the Chairman of the Conference Commission on Education and the Superintendent of the Alaska Mission.

The Conference Commission on Education has elected the following chairmen of the Area Camp Committees: Western Area: Ted Townsend, Juneau Area: Ed Stanton.

The Commission Education Chairman is grateful for the insight and experience that was shared with him in the Commission on Education meetings held this past weekend by the members of the Commission. As a Conference we need to be grateful for the good leadership shown in the camping programs of the Western Area at Kings Lake and the Juneau Area at their beautiful camp. Special thanks to Ed Stanton, chairman of the Juneau Area Camp Committee and to Ted Townsend, Western Area Camp Committee chairman, for their hard work and successful leadership that contributed so much toward the success of the camping program in the Alaska Mission.

Respectfully, submitted,

Richard E. Bruner, Chairman

REPORT OF THE JUNEAU AREA CAMP COMMITTEE

Program Subcommittee Report

The Program Planning subcommittee meets approximately eight times a year for the purpose of making plans for the Methodist Camps at our Eagle River camp each summer. (Meetings for planning the 1958 camping program were held on the third Sunday afternoon of each month from January to July, 1958, and a report meeting was held in October, 1958.) Smaller groups with

responsibilities for choosing and securing staff, planning the camp themes and choosing materials, planning menus and purchasing foods, and publicity hold separate meetings for accomplishing their work.

Two Methodist camps were held during the summer of 1958: Junior Camp, July 28 to August 3, with a total of 29 campers and staff; and Christian Adventure Camp, (for grades 7 through 12), August 4·14, with a total of 35 campers and staff. The theme for the Christian Adventure Camp this year was "The Earth is the Lord's". Claudia Kelsey served as Director of the Junior Camp and Rev. Ed Stanton of the Christian Adventure Camp.

There were several other groups which used the camp during the year. They were: Lutheran Youth; 4-H Club; Methodist Retreat; Lutheran Retreat: Methodist Winter Camp; Work Camp; Boy Scouts of America: Girl Scouts of America, Glaciologist Camp: Squirrels, Bears, and Mice.

A careful look at our financial statement reveals that our expenditures of $1127.39 amounted to approximately $45 less than our receipts for this period. Special efforts have been made by the committee to keep the camp fee low enough (about $2.00 per day) that many of our young people will be able to take part in the camping program. (Juneau Methodist Men contributed $45 in camperships which enabled several campers to take part who would otherwise have been unable to do so.) The difference between the camper's fees and the cost of operating the camps was met this year by an appropriation of $300 through the Conference Commission on World Service and Finance and $50 from the Juneau Woman's Society of Christian Service.

One point of emphasis has been to encourage campers from Ketchikan to take part in our summer camps. During the summer of 1958, the committee paid $15 travel expense to each of six campers from Ketchikan and also furnished travel expense for one leader from the Ketchikan area, Rev. Grace Weaver. For the 1959 summer camps, additional funds have been made available for this purpose through James McGiffin so that we will be able to pay

$25 travel expense for up to 12 campers from the Ketchikan area.

A further activity this year was a very successful winter retreat held in December 29-31, with a total of 18 campers and leaders in attendance. It is planned to make this a regular part of our camping program.

We now have only 46 acres instead of the original 74 acres, after a road was constructed through the camp. The Forest Service permit was rewritten.

The plan this year is to finish the kitchen part of the Kitchen-Dining Hall Building. We will prepare and clear an area and move three tent frames onto it. We expect to winterize two cabins for use in the winter camping program.

1960:

The camping program was a highly successful venture for the children, young people and adults of our church during this past year. The activities in both the Western area and the Juneau (Southeastern) area, will be reported by the respective area chairmen. The Commission on Education wants to express to the Mission deep appreciation for the leadership of every minister and layman who gave unselfishly of their time to this important work.

The elections for the new Camp Committee chairmen for the coming year were held and the results were:

Western Area Camp Committee chairman Rev. Dan Harlan; Juneau Area Camp Committee chairman-Rev. Ed Stanton.

We recommend to the Commission on Missions that they study and recommend that the Camp Capital Development program be made a Conference Advance Special.

We recommend the following amounts to be placed in the Conference Budget for the new year, 1960-61, for the Western Area Camp Program $500; Juneau Area Camp Program $500.

PERHAPS one of the most worthwhile portions of the Christian education program of the church is in the field of camping. Here we seek to teach our young people to learn to live together as Christians. It is in camp that many young people dedicate themselves to full time Christian service and many Christian homes find their beginning. We may say that the purpose of our camping program in

the church is to teach young people to "love God and to love their neighbor" through their experiences of living together and worshiping together at camp.

What I Learned At Camp:

- Its alright to be yourself— God doesn't care about your flaws
- How to swim & canoe, and that I like kickball!
- That God is my friend
- To be brave and to take chances
- How to be a better friend
- I discovered different ways to connect to God
- That I love to be outside
- That God loves us all no matter what and helps us through stuff
- I learned about being part of a community

These quotes are taken from actual camper evaluations at Alaska camps.

Support Camping Ministries:

1. Pray for the campers, counselors and staff as they live out God's call to grow in faith, love, and community at camp.
2. Send your kids to camp! See the other side of this insert for camp sessions & dates in your area.
3. Support camp scholarships: Give to the scholarship fund at your local church, the scholarship fund at Birchwood Camp, or to the Rural-Ethnic Scholarship Fund (Advance #931024)
4. Volunteer! Counselors & Maintenance helpers are always needed. Contact the camp or retreat center near you to learn

1961 Report of Commission on Education

Recommendations:

1. We recommend the following amounts to be placed in the Mission budget for the year 1961-62: Nome camp program $75; Western Area camp program $500; for the Southeastern Area camp program $500. (This recommendation has been presented to the Commission on World Service for consideration.

2. We recommend that each Area Camp Committee prepare long range plans of proposed camp developments (building according to Master Plan), year by year and projected costs to the Commission on Education and the

Division of National Missions.

3. We recommend that the "Juneau Area" designation be changed in the Journal to read "Southeastern Area."

4. We recommend and heartily endorse the Division of National Missions hope of providing a full-time Alaska Mission Director of Christian Education. The need is very great for such a person to direct leadership training programs; to advise in each Area Camping Program and conduct pre-camp training sessions with counselors; to conduct local church workshops; give counsel and direction to Sub-District Youth programs; and be a Christian Education

resource person for our expanding program.

5. We recommend that the Camp Capital Development program be continued as a Conference Advance Special.

Chairmen for the Area Camp Committees elected for 1961-62 are as follows:

Southeastern, June Christopher; Western, Dan Harlan.

Richard E. Bruner, Chairman

Report of Southeastern Area Camp Committee

Camping in the Southeastern Area should be the best ever this year. There is to be some leadership training this year in June.

The Facilities Committee has made some improvements in our buildings, which now number eight permanent tent frames. Four have been winterized.

A floor was put in the large army tent which increases its usefulness. A kitchen building is well on the way to completion. The contract for framing a dining room adjacent to the kitchen building is about to be awarded.

The Program Committee has been busy planning the 1961 season. The subcommittees on food, personnel, curriculum and resources have been busy. Jim LaBau, chairman of curriculum, has done an excellent job studying our needs.

We have curriculum materials on hand recommended by La Donna Bogardus. The recreation resources added this year include a World Games Kit, badminton, soccer balls, and a wind-up Victrola with records.

We anticipate good attendance at all camps. We trust our program will bring Christian camping at its best to the campers.

Alice Brown, Committee Member

1962:

We recommend that the Camp Capital Development program be continued as a Conference Advance Special.

The Commission wants to commend both Western and Southeastern Area Camping Leaders for their inspiring work with the children, youth and adults of our church.

Chairmen for the Area Camp Committees elected for 1962-63 are as follows: Southeastern, Charles Wilson; Western, Benjamin A. Laird.

Area Age Level Workers are: Southeastern Children's Workers; Claudia Kelsey; Youth

Worker, Judy Maier; Camp Committee Chairman, Charles Wilson; Adult Worker, Lloyd Nault.

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Report of Juneau Area Camp Committee

Camping is an "around the calendar " concern for those on the Juneau Area Camping Committee. Monthly meetings of the Facilities and Program subcommittees have continued thru the year plus Area Committee meetings and a camp training session. The following reports sum up these activities.

Summary of 1961 Camp Program Activities

Family Camp, May 27-31, 1961. Seven families participated with a total of 30 campers. Charles Wilson Camp Director.

Training Camp, June 17-18**,** Dan Harlan, Director. Eleven participating.

High School Camp, June 24-July 2, 1961. Two weekends with four boys during the week and three more on the weekends. Directors, Dr. and Mrs. I. J. Montgomery.

Junior High Camp, July 9-15. Fourteen participating; three campers from Ketchikan. Theme: "Camping Together as Christians."

Junior Camp, July 16-22. Seventeen campers and four counselors. Theme: "Living in God's World."

Camp Use for 1961 Compared to 1960

1961 1960

Campers C/Days

Totals 77/321

The Program Committee Treasurer's report for September 18, 1960 to September 17, 1961 was as follows: Receipts from camp fees, Alaska Mission, Juneau WSCS, Methodist Men, other donations and interest: $1,116.14. Disbursements including food ,travel, maintenance and insurance, cook's salary, equipment, printing, books and crafts, $1,175.00. Excess of disbursements over receipts, $50.76. Balance from 1960, $780.69. Balance on hand September 17, 1961, $720.98.

The camp schedule for 1962 is as follows: Training Session, June 22-24; Senior Camp, May 25-June 3; Junior High Camp, June 10-17; Junior Camp, August 5-11, and Family Camp, August 31-September 3. Work Camp, June 19 to August 1. It is of interest to note that people other than Methodists use the camp. A Lutheran Camp will be held June 3-7 and an Episcopal Camp August 11-18.

Facilities Committee

A work camp for the summer of 1962 was requested and it will be in camp for six weeks beginning June 19. Camp Manager, John Argetsinger had a summer work crew of four high school boys at camp every Wednesday afternoon and all one Saturday. They

winterized cabins, replaced tent frames with roofs and hung permanent doors, cleared camp areas, constructed two bridges and excavated the creek behind the kitchen for better drainage.

The camp was given a flatbed truck by Mr. Potter and the garage from the Juneau Methodist Church property has been moved to camp. The problem of the service road to the kitchen has been solved. The new kitchen is near completion including a cement chimney

with built-in connections for kitchen equipment. Work teams helped on the kitchen under the direction of John Argetsinger. It is estimated that if the chimney were built commercially it would have cost $4,000. We are greatly indebted to our camp manager, Mr. Argetsinger, for this work and his endless efforts.

Plans were made to erect the shell of the dining room in the summer of '61. However, that was not possible but is being done this summer. The approximate cost will be $6,000. $5,000 was gratefully received from the Division of National Missions for this project.

Priority items for the facilities committee include the following: Complete dining room and kitchen, build bath house and drying room, winterized all cabins, and add one set of latrines. A master plan serves as a guide in projecting camp development.

1963:

For the Area Camp Commissions: Southeastern, $500; Ketchikan, $75. Western, $600; Nome, $75; National Camp Leadership Training Transportation $250.

We recommend that the Camp Capital Development program be continued as a Conference Advance Special.

The Commission commends the faithful and growing work of the Area Camp Committees in expanding our camping program in Alaska.

Chairman for the Area Camp Committees elected for 1963-64: Southeastern, Charles Wilson

Southeastern Methodist Camp at Eagle River

General Statement

The Southeast Alaska Area Camping Committee, hereafter referred to as SAACC, is happy to report a very good year of camping at the Eagle River camp. Two main reasons are: (1) the summer of 1962 had the largest number of campers and camper days since the Eagle River Camp was started in 1954, (2) during this period the new kitchen and dining rooms at the camp were completed, in the rough, so that they can be used during the 1963 camping season.

Area Camp Committee

The SAACC, made up of the Program and the Facilities Committees, met monthly after the close of the 1962 camping season. Dr. McGiffin met with the group on March 27, 1963 and Reverend David Blackburn attended a Program Committee meeting May 8, 1963. The SAACC includes all of Southeast Alaska, however Ketchikan is the only area in SE Alaska, outside of Juneau who participates in the Eagle River camping program.

Some help has been received during the actual camps, which is greatly appreciated. This type of help is planned for the 1963 camps, but more year around Committee help is needed. It has been the responsibility of the Juneau group to make sure each camp had a director, full staff of counselors, a cook, a nurse, crusade scholar if needed and enough campers to hold the camps. Any assistance from the Conference Commission of Education in getting more SE Alaska participation on the SAACC and in the different Eagle River camp programs will be greatly appreciated by those presently serving on the committee.

Report of Program Activities-Jim LaBau. Chairman

A. Senior Camp-May 27 to June 2 Director Dr. I. J. Montgomery

... 3 Counselors ... 14 Campers, three from Ketchikan, 6 staying

through and 8 for week ends only . . . Theme, "Communism" . . .

Suggestion made to encourage daily participation in future camps if possible.

B. Junior High Camp-June 10-17 ... Director Judith Maier 3

Counselors ... 14 Campers ... Theme "Christian Faith"

C. Junior Camp-August 5-11 ... Director June Christopher 3 Counselors ... 14 Campers ... Theme "Discoveries in God's World."

D. Family Camp-August 31 through noon September 3 . . . Director Charles B. Wilson ... 17 adults and 18 children ... Theme "The Decline of U. S. Morals" ... Suggestion made to hire cook similar to youth camps permitting more time for family discussions, recreation and work around camp.

Campers in 1962 paid 2.50 per day which included 50 cents for maintenance and insurance. Families at Family Camp brought their own food and also paid the 50 cents for all over six years of age.

Report of Camp Facilities Activities-Jim Bones, Chairman

In 1962 there was a Methodist Student group in residence at the camp for 6 weeks, the 5th college group in 9 years. Substantial progress continued in the building of the physical plant. The kitchen is ready and at this writing has much of the equipment installed, and the dining hall was placed under roof in 1962 by contract. Additional improvements included four additional tent frames converted to cabins, an additional latrine, additional storage space, and bridge and trail construction. A proposed plan of work for 1963 is as follows:

A. Complete the installation of kitchen equipment.

B. Complete kitchen chimney. It is now usable.

C. Construct storage room, work tables, counters and cooking area hood in kitchen.

D. Complete rustic siding of 6 cabins and the new dining hall. Install dining hall mill work.

E. Complete staining and painting of all structures.

A budget estimate of $1145 was submitted to the Camp Facility Committee in February, 1963 for the above work.

The above items on the Camp Facilities have been taken in the main from a report made by John Argetsinger, Camp Manager, dated March 17, 1963.

Our thanks goes to all those in the Conference, the Division of National Missions and all others who have helped make camping possible in SE Alaska.

Mr. Argetsinger states in his report that "Nationally, camping has become a significant part of Christian education and the spiritual life of our churches" and this is certainly true and we hope will continue to be true in SE Alaska.

Charles B. Wilson, Chairman

1964:

Southeastern Methodist Camp at Eagle River Report for 1963 Camp Season

Charles B. Wilson, Director

General Statement

For several years Eagle River camping has been growing and the summer of 1963 was by far the largest as indicated by the following comparison of campers days: 1960-321, 1961-321, 1962-456, and 1963-1344.

Coming into Auke Bay

The new Alaska Marine Highway system made it possible for Ketchikan to send 51 youths which compares to 4-6 for previous years. This increase in campers from Ketchikan, which did not materialize until shortly before the camping season, caused a number of extra meetings and headaches, but after all was said and done everything worked out and a good camping season was concluded at Eagle River.

As an aftermath of the large number of campers from Ketchikan, an area camp conference was held in Juneau February 8, 1964 and attended by Donna Ferguson and Bernie Moore of Ketchikan, Walter Hays, Executive Secretary of the Board of Education, as well as ten members of the southeast area Program and Facilities committees. The meeting did much to inform the Ketchikan representatives of the activities and problems facing the camp committees in planning for a camp season. Plans were laid for the camping season and assignment of responsibilities between the various locations were made. This meeting was very successful in that it brought Ketchikan representatives to Juneau to meet with the Area Camp Committee for the first time. It is certainly hoped that funds will be made available to continue these meetings at least on an annual basis and twice a year would be better. Plans were made at this meeting to have an exchange of campers with the Western Area camp for high school campers.

Our thanks goes to Rev. Walter Hayes for his guidance and assistance with a number of the camp details, such as coordinating with the Western Area Camp committee and A.M.U. in the printing of camp brochures.

Report of Program Activities-Jim LaBau, Camp Program Chairman

1. Senior Camp-May 25 to June 2 ... Director Mrs. Frank Maier from Juneau ... 5 counselors, 2 from Ketchikan ... 25 campers, 15 from Ketchikan and 10 from Juneau Douglas ... Theme, followed text "I follow Christ Above All!" ... Four of the Juneau youth commuted as they held day jobs, however the camp committee has ruled out commuters in future camps as little is contributed or received by the commuters. Campers and staff alike spoke of this camp as being very successful.

2. Junior High Camp-June 2 to June 8 ... Director Rev. David Fison, Ketchikan ... 5 counselors, 3 from Ketchikan ... 31 campers, 15 from Ketchikan and 16 from Juneau Douglas ... Theme "Christian Stewardship." Camp highlights included beach hikes, cook outs, campfire songs to a guitar, and "Unofficial" midnight softball game and a rain hike.

3. Junior Camp-June 9 to June 15 ... codirectors Mrs. Frank Baily and Mrs. Charles B. Wilson from Juneau ... 7 counselors, 4 from Ketchikan .... 40 campers, 21 from Ketchikan and 19 from Juneau Douglas ...Theme, "We explore God's World." ...

The camp boasted a wide variety of crafts and interesting camp fun projects and camp cookouts, but the one most remembered will probably be the toad race.

Family Camp-August 30 to September 2 ... Director Jim LaBau ...

10 families with 38 in attendance, 15 adults and 23 children and youth ... Theme "You and the Church" ... Family fun activities, round table discussions, camp work projects and a Sunday evening inside picnic attended by over 90 persons were highlights of the family camp.

One of the factors contributing to the success of the above camps was the consistently excellent chow prepared by Mrs. June Eshelby who cooked for all three camps. (Families at family camp did their own cooking) On behalf of the program committee we wish to thank all those who helped make the 1963 camping season at Eagle River the largest and in our minds the most successful of all camping seasons at Eagle River.

Financially the camp year came through fine due to the increase of fees from campers. Compared to 1962 (652 dollars) the campers fees increased three fold (1842.50 dollars). Balance at the end of the 1963 season was 527.42 dollars compared to 105.32 for 1962.

Report of Camp Facilities Activities-David Crosby, Chairman

John Argetsinger, Camp Manager

During the year the new kitchen was completed with the exception of a cafe type stove and gas hot water heater which are to be installed prior to the 1964 camping season. The siding was put on and stained on a number of cabins and the kitchen. Windows were installed in the kitchen and dining hall.

Both the kitchen and the dining hall gave a tremendous boost to the number of campers which could be comfortably accommodated in the camp. In fact without both, it would have been impossible to have had the number of campers we had last summer. This was the first season for full use of the kitchen and the dining hall. The dining hall still lacks door and heating, although the fireplace is scheduled for completion this next year.

Also on the agenda for the coming year is the construction of a winter cabin, enlargement of two cabins and the building of several additional cabins if time, funds and help permits. A shower room, with facilities to dry clothes is also on the list, but may not be completed this year.

One of the concerns of the camp facilities committee at this writing is that a college work camp group, previously scheduled to help with construction at camp this summer, may be rescheduled to the Anchorage area because of the March 27 earthquake. If this happens most of the improvements planned for Eagle River will not be made this summer.

The Eagle River camp is slated for a new camp truck which will surely be welcomed as the present camp truck is in sad shape.

With reservation, camping in southeast Alaska has become an integral part of the church program and will become more so as the Eagle River Camp nears completion and as more and more children, youth and adults have "mountain top" experiences at camp.

1965:

Six youth at Eagle River Senior High Camp. Six delegates attended Birchwood camp in camper exchange program.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA AREA CAMP REPORT

1964 CAMPING SEASON

Charles B. Wilson, Chairman

The Southeast Alaska Area Methodist camping program has continued its steady growth as evidenced by the comparison of camper days since 1960:

(Camper day means spending a night at camp).

1960 321

1961... 321

1962 456

1963 1344

1964 2743

A report of camper days for 1964 and individuals using the camp:

Methodist Summer Camping 1034/146

Methodist Winter Camp-youth 50/27

Lutheran Retreat-Spring :..... 28/14

Lutheran Retreat-Fall 45/19

Lutheran Summer Camping 649/84

Crippled Children-Day camp 180/20

Crescent City, Calif., H.S. Group 182/26

College Work Camp 418/11

Methodist Family Camp 108/29

Miscellaneous 40/2

Totals 2743/378

The camp was occupied steadily with institutional camping for 9 weeks, and in addition for 4 week ends with 3 youth groups and a family camp. Total camp occupancy was 74 days.

PROGRAM

The attached program reports give complete details of the S. E. Area Methodist camps, however, the following breakdown covers significant points:

Senior Hi -- Understanding the Christian Faith

Junior Hi -- Christian Community

Junior Camp No. 1 -- We Adventure in God's World

Junior Camp No. 2 -- Same as Jr. Camp 1

Family Camp -- Worth of the individually in the Christian Family

For the Family camp participants, who brought food, the only charge was for camp maintenance of fifty cents per night for age 6 and above and 25 cents for below age 6. Twelve adults and 19 children attended family camp.

With funds supplied by the Alaska Mission Conference, two persons from Metlakatla and two from Ketchikan attended the second annual day planning conference in Juneau on February 12 and 13, 1965. We are so grateful for the funds making this coordinating conference possible. Planning for the coming camping season was completed with the exception of a few minor details which could not be done at this time. Our thanks also goes to Dr. Groves, our mission Superintendent, and Walter Hayes, the Board of

Education executive secretary, for attending this conference and for sharing many wonderful ideas with the group. All members in attendance agreed that such an annual conference was very beneficial to the S.E. Alaska camping program and should be continued in future years.

The Camp Stamp book program was initiated during the years and should receive very favorable acceptance in its second year.

Following is the treasurer's report for the Program Committee, as of February, 1965:

Balance on hand as of March 31, 1964 $84.34

Balance on Hand February 12, 1965 $850.86

Reverend Jones, last year's Program Chairman was re-elected as was David Crosby, Chairman of the Facilities Committee. We were very pleased that Reverend Jones attended the Senior High camp training session from funds provided by the mission conference, Board of Education. The session was held in Oregon in March, 1965.

FACILITIES

Improvements to Camping facilities during the year. The College age and the High School age groups constructed a multi-purpose cabin designed for winter as well as summer use of summer facilities in the past, but this has not been a desirable arrangement. The cabin is substantially built, and is 16'x32' with a 6'x12·· alcove for the heating unit. It can be divided into 2 or 3 separate units if desirable. For three couples at Family Camp the unit will be a welcome addition at the camp. The value of the cabin is five thousand dollars. It is located in Rhoda Smith Village, which was enlarged by additional clearing.

In addition the college group sided all cabins and stained them, and did considerable trail work, largely gravel. The Crescent City High School group completed the entrance to the new cabin, including doors; completed siding the new dining hall, stained the dining hall and cleared for the new bath and wash house, with dry room, and the pump and generator house.

Other improvements were made to the kitchen-dining hall, including doors, and a new institutional stove, additional kitchen equipment, and bulk gas storage. Frank Maier has started the stone fireplace which is about 40 percent complete.

Construction priorities for this coming year are as follows:

1. Shower, washhouse with dry room including heater and a pump house.
2. Sanitary privies in Rhoda Smith Village

3. Cook's cabin, as cabin now being used is not worth upkeep.

4. Finish work in kitchen

5. Nature and craft cabin

6. Cabin for maintenance person

The S. E. Area camp committee feel very fortunate in having had two very fine work groups this past summer, one College age and one High School age group. We are happy that two similar groups have been promised for this coming summer.

As the camp facilities are increasing each year the S.E. Area camp committee have given some thought to hiring a camp manager who would live at the camp during the camping season. Along with this change would be the necessity for revising camp fees to cover this additional expense and to pay for a cook who probably would be hired for the entire camping season.

The S.E. Area Committee is deeply indebted and grateful to John Argetsinger who has been the camp manager since the camp started some ten years ago. Mr. Argetsinger has faithfully driven to the camp every week, and sometimes three, four, and five days during the week throughout the summer camping season. He has also made regular visits to the camp during the winter months to check on the camp. The camp committee recognizes that with the additional facilities at the camp and the increased use of the camp by Methodists and other groups, the need for the camp manager to be at the camp also increases. The committee believes that Mr. Argetsinger, or any other person, should not be required to make so many visits to the camp on his own time without pay, and that in the interest of the camp a summer camp manager or maintenance person should be employed within the next year or two. A number of details would first have to be worked out such as a place for the manager to live at the camp, and funds to pay his salary.

Our thanks is extended to Reverend Walter Hays for his assistance with the camp during the year and that of Dr. Groves on his visits to the Juneau area.

1966:

Southeast Alaska Area Camp

Charles B. Wilson, Chairman

The Southeast Alaska Area Camp had greater usage this past year than any previous year in the history of the camp which dates back to more than 10 years ago. The number of campers spending a night at the camp has increased from 321 in 1960 to 1,344 in 1963, 2,743 in 1964 and to 2,892 for 1965.

From the response to a letter about the Southeast Alaska Methodist camp sent to all churches and other possible user groups, even more outside church groups plan to use the camp this coming season.

Program Theme

"A Cup of Water"

"Camping Together as Christians"

"We Discover in God's World"

A Christian Family in a Changing

Living and Working Together as Christian Families

A college work camp group this past summer under the .general supervision of John Argetsinger built the outside structure, walls and roof, for the wash, dry and shower room, during a month stay at camp.

John Argetsinger, after serving faithfully on

the Southeast Alaska Methodist Camp Committee for over ten consecutive years, resigned the position as camp manager and as a member on the area camp committee, effective August 15, 1965. Mr. Argetsinger has throughout the years devoted untiringly much of his personal time at the camp. Being an engineer and a builder by trade, he caught a vision of what such a camp could do for Methodism and to this end he gave the camp his professional knowledge and ability. Alaskan Methodists, especially those in Southeast Alaska, close enough to Juneau to see and use this beautiful camp setting in full view of two fascinating glaciers and surrounded by a stream, with mountains on one side and the ocean on the other, will forever be grateful for Mr. Argetsinger's very fruitful efforts and hours of toil given over the years. As Mr. Argetsinger had guided the development of the camp from its beginning, considerable thought, study and action by the Facility Committee had to be effected immediately to take over the many responsibilities assumed by Mr. Argetsinger. This transition has pretty well been accomplished; however, Mr. Argetsinger still provides counsel and advice to the Committee.

The Facility Committee, following a request for professional assistance from the Alaska Mission Conference, was privileged to have Rev. Leo Cramer of Anchor Park Church in Anchorage come to Juneau for a meeting with the Southeast Area Committee for planning future development of the camp. As a result of Mr. Cramer's assistance, as well as the assistance of Dr.

Groves and Rev. Hayes, the following camp development plan was established:

1966-Wash and shower house - Kitchen and dining room completion

1967-Add two winter cabins which can also serve as temporary staff cabins

1968--Add staff housing of permanent nature which can double for winter camp use

1969-Completion of permanent water and electrical systems

In late March, 1966 estimates for the 1966 projects totaling $10,759 were forwarded to Dr. Groves who in turn forwarded the requests to Rev. Albert Adams, Director of Church Extensions for Outposts Missions, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A letter has been received from the National Office stating that funds have been authorized to cover the estimates forwarded with the exception of $3,500 for cabinetwork in the kitchen. Plans are now under way to complete the dining room, the wash and shower room and the kitchen with the exception of the cabinets, this coming summer.

The Southeast Area Committee is so grateful to all who have assisted in instructing the committee in procedures and paperwork

necessary to obtain funds to complete the above items at camp.

1967

CAMPING

It was the Board's concern that the Mission field have a quality program in camping at both camps. While this is a long-range program, certain definite steps were taken this year to begin this process.

Uniform recruitment was one attempt to secure counselors for both camping programs well enough in advance to make effective training possible. Evaluation: this was found to work well in the Western area program. Although pastors of the Southeast churches were very cooperative in sending names of potential counselors, follow-up efforts were not successful in securing counselors.

Uniform Counselor Training was the attempt to provide training in the philosophy and methods of Christian education in a camp setting. Western Area counselors have received 24 hours of training in camping philosophy at a "Why Session" at Birchwood in April. Western area counselors are committed to be in camp with their deans 48 hours prior to the beginning of each camping session. Southeast counselors will combine a how and why session at camp three days prior to the camping season. Mr. Hays has provided leadership for all of these sessions.

United Methodist camping philosophy is an objective toward which we are presently moving. The use of small group methods in junior and junior high camping is seen to be very desirable. Senior highs ought to have more experience in work-camp and academy settings. The Board has the responsibility for establishing camp

philosophy. At the request of the Western Area Camp Committee it has assumed this function for Birchwood Camp. Additional liaison remains to be accomplished with the Southeast Camp Committee.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA AREA CAMP

Charles B. Wilson, Chairman

Southeast Alaska Camp Committee reports a good camping year although the camp experienced a drop in camper days from 2892 in 1965 to 2013 in 1966. The use of the camp by Methodists dropped approximately one-third for the second consecutive year. This is a concern of the SE Camp Committee and should be of the participating churches: Juneau, Douglas, Ketchikan and Sitka.

This was the first year the camp hired a camp manager and cook for the camp session. A fee of $17.50 per camper week was paid to cover these expenses. Much was learned in operating the eight weeks of camping with a cook and manager; however, this part of the camping operations was considered very successful.

Based on the experience of this first year the camp fees were raised to $22.50 for the coming year.

Laird Glasscock, a retired minister from the state of Washington, did a fine job as camp manager, being very handy with tools. He kept busy fixing something during his entire three months as manager which was very much appreciated. Mrs. Loffswold, the mother of one of the members of the Juneau church, came up from California and did a fine job of cooking.

METHODIST CAMPS (one week each)

Theme

Junior High -- "Why Things Happen and How"

Junior -- "Learned in God's World"

Senior High -- "Churchmanship"*

Family Camp -- "Understanding Parents"

*Twelve of this number were from West Covina, California. They joined our Senior High youth in a work camp experience with study and discussion in the evening. This experience was considered only partially successful as the two groups, including the leadership, found it somewhat difficult to cooperatively plan and carry out both work and study activities. This group appreciated the assistance of Rev. Walter Hays.

Facility improvements at the camp included the laying of a tile floor in the dining room by a Juneau-Douglas work group over Memorial Day weekend while last year's Annual Mission Conference was in session and the near completion of the wash and dry room which has four showers and six washing units. Also during the first week of camp the well went dry forcing a quick digging of a new well, which turned out very satisfactorily.

Facility improvements planned for the coming year include the digging of a new well to furnish additional water for wash and dry room, the building of cabinets in the kitchen, putting on of a new roof on the kitchen and dining room, wall boarding the dining room and a number of other smaller projects.

One great loss to the camp was the passing of John Argetsinger very suddenly from a heart attack on February 4, 1967. No other one person did so much for the S.E. Methodist Camp, and although he had resigned from active participation in the camp in the past two years, John still was available for

consultation on camp problems, building, etc. At a Methodist Men's luncheon on the day before he died, he advised the camp committee members that the snow on the roof was not endangering the building for the roof was built strong enough to withstand all the snow that collected. Mr. Argetsinger will certainly be missed, and the camp committee, the Alaska Mission Conference, and the National Division have all profited tremendously from the labors of this man and his devoted family.

1968:

The Board of Education shared a concern with continually improving and supporting the camping program. They urged the practice of early recruitment of counselors. The promotional material was effective where it was used.

The drop in enrollment at the summer camps reflects several problems. One is the travel time and cost of getting to and from camp. Another is the lack of personal recruitment on the part of the local church. The number of campers and counselors usually directly reflect the interest in promotion taken in the local congregation.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA AREA CAMP

Charles B. Wilson, Chairman

This year the camp experienced a slight increase in camper days from last year and as the facilities continue to be developed a greater increase is expected in future years. Of a total of 2,045 camper days, 576 were Methodist week camps, 93 other than Methodist week camps and 538 one or more day camps, both Methodist and others. Nineteen different individuals and groups used the camp during the year. The camp fee was $22.50 per camper per week. The cook and manager was provided for the second year.

On behalf of the S.E. Alaska Area Camp Committee I wish to thank Dr. Groves and Reverend Walter Hays for their support and leadership during this past year. Although we did not have a full meeting of all S.E. representatives this year, Reverend Thomas Dahl visited Ketchikan and Sitka and met with members of both churches interested in camping and with the Ministerial Fellowship of both areas. One of the main reasons for visiting Sitka and Ketchikan was to promote the ecumenical H.S. camp which is scheduled to start the third of June.

A special thanks also goes to the National Board of Missions for their continued financial support of the camp and especially for the $17. 000 allocated this year for building and maintenance of the S.E. Alaska camp.

Program Sub-Committee Report, 1967

Ernest H. Jones, Chairman

Junior Camp - John Tindell, director

June 11 - 17 - 37 campers, 6 staff

Theme: "Exploring in God's World"

Perhaps our most successful camp. The fresh enthusiasm of youngsters this age leads to a delightful experience for campers and counselors.

Junior High Camp- Walter Warner, director

June 25 - July 1 - 15 campers, 4 staff

Theme: "Camping Together As Christians"

With tarps and ponchos, this camp proved that cookouts and other outdoor activities can be done, even in rainy Southeast! The small size of the camp helped make Christian fellowship a reality. A good cook, Mrs. Emil Engel, and a very helpful camp manager, Harold Carter, contributed much to the success of these camps.

Senior High Camp - Thomas Dahl, director

June 18 - 24 - 3 campers, 1 staff

A first for Southeast: a trail camp, hiking 10 miles to Berner's Bay, camping out along the way. It was a good experience in breaking trail, using maps and compass, and learning to depend on each other.

Family Camp - Ernest Jones, director

September 1 - 4 - 57 campers, 6 staff

Theme: "The Responsible Christian Family"

Adults and teenagers joined in discussions of the theme from the National Family Life Conference. Some camp improvement work was done.

1968 Camps:

June 2 - 8 - Ecumenical Senior High Camp

August 11 - 17 - Junior Camp; Walter Warner, director

August 18 - 24 - Junior High Camp; John Tindell, director

August 30 - September 2 - Family Camp

FACILITY SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT, 1967

Dwayne E. Storley, Chairman

The year 1967 has seen some major improvements made to the facilities of the camp at Eagle River near Juneau, Alaska. Some contract labor and many hours of donated labor by members of the Juneau and Douglas Methodist churches have gone into the camp this past year. There remains a lot of work to be done to bring our present facilities to full utilization in our camping program.

KITCHEN: Thirty-seven feet of base cabinets with Formica tops and sliding doors were constructed with donated labor. This has provided much needed storage and counter space for food preparation and food serving. It has made cleanup much easier and improved the appearance of the kitchen.

DINING ROOM: The dining room has been paneled with donated labor and one hundred folding chairs and fifteen round tables were purchased. The tables did not arrive in time for this camping season but are now here for

next season. Work continued on the fireplace and it is hoped this will be completed before long. Window casings and door casings remain to be put on. This has given the room a more finished look and the new tables should improve seating at meals and also add to programs conducted in the room.

KITCHEN AND DINING ROOM: New asphalt shingles were purchased for this building and were laid by donated labor. This improved the looks of the building and also stopped leaks in the roof.

WASH AND DRY HOUSE: The first phase of this building was completed prior to the opening of camp this season. This work consisted of the installation of four showers, eight wash basins and concreting the entire floor and installation of a propane hot water heater. This work was done by contract with the camp purchasing the materials directly. This first phase of the wash and dry building has provided a much needed facility at the camp and was appreciated by the campers and counselors.

OLD KITCHEN BUILDING: This building has been reworked on the inside and is nearly complete at this time. This work included insulation, plywood paneling, cupboards, self-contained water system, cooking facilities and gas lights. This work is being done by donated labor. The building is being used by one person during the winter months as caretaker or watchman's quarters. This building can now be used as quarters for the camp manager during the summer camping season.

DRIVEWAYS: About one-half of the driveways in the camp area have received new gravel surfacing. It is hoped that the rest of the driveways will be gravel surfaced in the spring. This work is being done with donated labor and is a big improvement as it rains quite often in Southeast Alaska.

CAMP MANAGER This is the second year we have furnished a fulltime camp manager during the camping season. Mr. Harold Carter served in this capacity this summer and did a tremendous job in keeping the facilities in order and operating during the camp season. He also made many small improvements to the various buildings at the camp. This has been a big help in operating the camp and has relieved a lot of responsibility of the local camp committee.

COOK: This is the second year in which a full-time cook has been provided for the camping season. This has worked quite well even though the present quarters provided are not adequate.

CARETAKER OR WATCHMAN: This is the first year we have had a person stay at the camp during the winter months. This has been talked about for some time and this fall we received a proposal from Mr. Don Fisher who wanted no pay, but only a place to live. As our facilities become better equipped the use of persons of this type will be needed and not as much confusion will be encountered as now.

CONCLUSIONS: This has been a rather good year for work accomplished at the Southeast Alaska Methodist Camp. Our camp is rather unique in that we are on land leased from the U.S. Forest Service. The present lease expires in 1979. For this reason our camp must be made available to camping groups other than Methodist. We are now providing a fulltime manager, cook and all food and recreational equipment. In order to keep groups coming back we must provide all the services and personnel and they have to be good when we are serving the public so to speak. We have reached a point in our facilities where we cannot maintain them with Methodist camps alone and additional facilities are needed to meet the demands of the groups who use our camp. This year also saw more requests for use of the camp during weekends in the late fall and early winter. This is a new area opening up in the use of our camp and we believe winter camping should be encouraged. This will involve some remodeling of our present buildings and a new look at any future building construction. This will also affect our budget requirements.

I want to say thanks to the members of the Juneau and Douglas Methodist churches who donated many hours of labor to the camp this past year. It is greatly appreciated.

Rev. John Shaffer at the primitive camp

1969:

SOUTHEAST ALASKA AREA CAMP

Charles B. Wilson, Chairman

The 1968 camping season experienced a small decrease in camper days over the previous season. In 1967, a total of 2.045 camper days were recorded compared to 1908 camper days in 1968. One encouraging note is that the Methodist use of the camp increased from 576 camper days in 1967 to 752 in 1968. However, the 1969 camping season is expected to have the most week camp users than any previous year.

Several new groups are planning on using the camp which will be in use all but *2* or 3 weeks of the summer, unless a group drops out at the last minute.

The camp fee is $22.50 per camper week, the same as 1968. A cook and camp manager will be provided for the third year.

Program Report of Methodist Camps

High School Ecumenical Camps

June 2-8, 19 campers, 5 staff-Director, Jim Alter

Theme "Prophets on Main Street;" Current Social Issues

(A very successful camp, the first ecumenical with Episcopal, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran participating)

Junior Camp

August 12-17, 18 campers, 6 staff-Director, Rev. Walter Warner

Theme "Exploring God's World" -Weather cooperated, much outside camping done.

Junior High Camp

August 18-24, 13 campers, 5 staff-Director, Rev. John Tindell · Theme; Eugene Lacbach's book "World Without End" Very exciting camp with German exchange student, Norbert Denninghous and his guitar adding much to the camp.

Family Camp

Labor Day Weekend - 38 campers, 1 director-Don Gotschall

Theme "Family Living and Recreations" -
A very good camp -A good time had by all. ·

Facility Report

The Alaska Mission Conference provided $2,000 for general upkeep, maintenance and repair of the camp. With these funds the 35 KW generator was purchased and installed along with an electric pump. So that for the

first time in several years pumping water is a joy.

Other improvements included roofing a lumber drying shed and the shop, graveling (10 inches) the road into the lodge building and clearing brush between the lodge and the highway. We were privileged to have a high school work camp group from Everett, Washington under the leadership of Mrs. Virginia Peterson, the Methodist Pastor's wife at Everett. This group of 30 people were only able to stay a week and during that week they were on work projects four days. For the time at camp, they did excellent, but our camp committee agreed that unless a group could stay two weeks, it was hardly worth the trouble of setting up the group, transporting them to camp, etc.

For the next year, we have submitted a request to the National Division for $19,000 to remodel and winterize the kitchen, winterize the dining room, build a well house and generator house, move old kitchen and complete for managers quarters, complete the fireplace, complete the second unit of the wash and shower facility and remodel the old garage to a winter cabin which could be used for cooks quarters in the summer. We are very hopeful of receiving these funds so that the above work projects can be completed. This would make it possible to use the camp practically each weekend all winter. Many groups for the past year or two have wanted to use the facilities in the winter, but without the kitchen and dining room being winterized; use has been restricted to the winter cabin, which can only house some 15-20 comfortably.

Our thanks go to Rev. Walter Hays for his assistance for securing work campers and to Dr. Groves for his leadership and help during the year and for the past several years he has been Superintendent of the Alaska Mission Conference. We will certainly miss Dr. Groves, and on behalf of the Southeastern Alaska Camp Committee, we wish him God's speed in his retirement.

1970:

SOUTHEAST ALASKA AREA CAMP

Charles B. Wilson, Chairman

The year of 1969 has been a very active camping year showing an increase in camp usage from 1908 camper days in 1968 to 2622 days in 1969. The largest part of this increase was in non-Methodist use other than four week camps although the Methodist camper days increased from 752 to 903 days. Besides the summer week camps the camp was occupied by campers for 21 weeks and by approximately this same amount of time by some 20 to 25 work groups involved in a number of camp improvement projects.

Financially, as the Program financial summary will show, the camp suffered a loss primarily because three weeks camps were cancelled prior to their starting date. In each case the reported reason was a lack of campers. The camp week fee of $22.50 for 1969 has been increased to $27.50 for 1970.

CAMP IMPROVEMENTS

1. Moved old kitchen to new location overlooking camp entrance where it will be used for camp managers quarters and by campers

when he is not on staff.

2. Dug new well, installed pump and will have two pressure tanks installed and pipe laid by the time this report is made to Annual

Conference. Found good water at 59 feet.

3. Cemented fireplace in fall and enjoyed its warmth and glow all winter and spring.

4. Insulated dining room and kitchen; project completed with the exception of nailing the sheeting over the insulation. Getting the

camp ready for the Environmental Education school program required shifting priorities so as to have the camp ready by April 15, 1970.

NEW ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SCHOOL PROGRAM—A FIRST FOR ALASKA

Early last fall members of the Camp Committee, officials of the School and Forest Service representatives began discussing plans for use of the Southeast Alaska Area Camp for 2 weeks of 6th and 7th grade students in May, 1970.

At first the idea sounded beyond anything we could accomplish at our camp. Many questions were raised, not the least of which was how we were going to house 60 school kids and some 12 to 14 counselors so early in the spring in summer type cabins. The discussions became serious; 6 cabins were cold-weatherized, (plastic put on sides over screens and stoves installed) 5 double bunk beds were put in each of the 6 cabins so 60 individuals could be housed in them, and the two weeks of Environmental Education School camping were very successfully completed.

Prior to the two week camps, some 52 individuals, primarily teachers and others interested in this camping program and high school students who were going to be counselors attended two weekends of training at the camp.

This training was the first of its kind offered in Alaska and was under the direction of Alice Cook, with the U.S. Forest Service who enlisted the assistance of Environmental Education Specialists from the state of Washington and the Juneau Douglas Community College. The School Board has earmarked some $5,000 for the Environmental Camping program next year and the Southeast Alaska Area Camp committee has been requested to cold-weatherize more cabins so as to house a considerably larger group than the 60 at a time we had this year. Our committee has already requested $3,000 to build and cold-weatherize additional cabins in the form of a letter to Rev. Wischmeier. Without this extra funding we can hardly see how we can prepare the camp for the large group expected in the fall of 1970 and in the spring of 1971.

CAMP IMPROVEMENT FUNDING

A year ago our report indicated that a request for $19,000 had been made for camp improvement. In 1969 we were granted the first $6,000 of this amount to remodel and winterize the kitchen, dig a new well and put in a winter water system and for a few other improvement projects. We had been told that we could expect the second $6,000 in 1970, however in December, 1969 we received word that this type of camp funding had been cut and that we were not getting any such funds for 1970. This caused us to change our improvement projects from remodeling the kitchen to winterizing the kitchen and dining room and putting in the new water system.

We will certainly be grateful for some funds to build and cold weatherize additional cabins so we can plan on offering the camp for the expanded Environmental Education School program this fall.

Our appreciation is especially extended to our Mission Superintendent, Rev. Ac Wischmeier for his very wholesome interest in the camp and for his cooperation, assistance and guidance throughout the year.

1971: Camping

United Methodists in Alaska are involved in three resident camping programs; these include: Southeast Alaska Methodist Camp near Juneau, Birchwood Camp near Anchorage, and Harding Lake Camp near Fairbanks. We are pleased to see that all three of these camps sponsor cooperative camping and are moving towards a broader representation in their governing committees.

A major emphasis of the year was the visit of Maurice D. Bone, a nationally known consultant in outdoor education, who came to Alaska during September to meet with the committees of all

three of these camps to give guidance in their long-range planning and development. Mr. Bone is a partner in the firm of Bone and Britton and the co-author of the basic reference volumes in the

field "Site Selection and Development-Camp Conferences Retreat."

We feel he gave invaluable assistance to these three committees as they planned for the future use of these facilities.

A very real word of appreciation is also expressed to Mr. Randy Bradley of Springfield, Illinois, and Miss Wendy Darling of Las Vegas, Nevada, who served as summer volunteers in the Juneau-Douglas Larger Parish and at Birchwood Camp respectively for the contribution that they made to our summer camping program.

We look forward to several major emphasis in our ministry of Christian Education during the coming summer and fall:

1. Miss Louise Davis, of Nashville, Tennessee will serve as a special resource person in summer camp in Juneau, Anchorage, and Fairbanks in the area of nature crafts. She will also conduct a workshop for vacation church school and day camp leadership in Juneau and Anchorage. Miss Davis is a nationally recognized resource person in the field of camping and is the author of the junior camp book *We Discover in God's World.* Miss Davis is volunteering her services for this month; our board will cooperate in providing some travel assistance along with other churches and agencies.

2. Summer Service Teams from Centenary College in Shreveport Louisiana; the Central Illinois Conference, the Greencastle District of the South Indiana Conference and United Methodist 'Churches in Bradenton, Florida, Pasco, Washington, and Des Moines, Washington, will be working in the Alaska Mission this summer. These teams will provide leaderships for vacation church schools, camp counseling, day camp and recreation programs and outreach to teens in Nome, Sitka, Southeast Alaska Camp, Homer, Kenai, and at East Anchorage Church. We look forward to their time with us and the tremendous contribution that they will make.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA AREA CAMP

Charles B. Wilson, Chairman (Co)

The use of the Southeast Alaska Area Camp is changing. As indicated a year ago the camp is now being used more by secular groups on weekends and by the Environmental (Outdoor) Education program than by church groups for camps of a week duration:

Camper Days: 1970 1969 1968

Ecumenical church camps (2) weeks 478

Glacier Bible-Lutheran 177

Girl Scouts 192

Other than Week Camps 541

Methodist Family Camp 153

Peach Tree, Ga. Work Camp 196

Environmental Education 2100

Total 3937 2622 1908

The Environmental Education program for 1970-71 is now through 6 weeks of overnight camps (5 days each) for some 300

Maggies Garden

6th graders. Each week has had approximately 11 counselors and 5 staff members. The last camp ended May 28, 1971. The program was delayed a week in starting because of some 3-5 feet of snow on the grounds at camp. Our thanks is extended to the State Highway Department for plowing the road open into the lodge in order to prepare the camp for the program. This program is considered quite successful at the SE Alaska Area Camp because

of the strategic location of the camp-in the midst of streams, the woods, glaciers and a short distance from the ocean with one

of the best beaches in the Juneau area-perfect for the Environmental Education program. This program pays the camp $1.00 per person per night and they furnish their own food, cooks and general maintenance.

CAMP IMPROVEMENTS

1. Build one cabin with the help of the Peach Tree Work Camp group for a cost of $482.41.

2. Purchased additional kitchen equipment to accommodate larger groups. One Garland gas range, cooking utensils, one gas refrigerator

3. An anonymous donor has given $500.00 to build another cabin. Hope to build it this summer with the help of Neighborhood Youth

Corps trainees.

HIGH SCHOOL WORK GROUP-Pasco, Washington

A group of 15 students and their counselors will come to Juneau to counsel and assist with two weeks of camps for 120 disadvantaged youngsters from the Juneau area who would not be able to participate without financial help. The Borough Recreation committee and others in the area are coordinating this camping program including the raising of funds for the $27.50 camper fee for the week of camping. This is the same fee that is charged other campers this year where the camp furnishes the cook, manager and food. In 1974 the camp was turned over to the Juneau School Board.

ARGETSINGER, S.E. ALASKA CAMP

Rev. Robert McNabb reported on the Argetsinger Camp in S. E. Alaska. He noted that the camp was turned over to the School District, but that we had the first option to repossess it. Due to the cut in the school budget, the district could no longer fund the camp and thus returned it to us.

In order to use it this summer, $1000 is needed for repairs. Rev. McNabb moved that $1000 be taken from benevolent reserves to

pay for the repair. Discussion followed. Rev.

James Fellers moved to amend the motion to loan the S. E. Camp $1000. Seconded by Robert Bowers. After further discussion, the question was called for and it was passed. The amendment was voted on and lost. The motion to give the camp $1000 from Benevolent Reserves

was voted upon and carried.

The item of insurance was discussed at length, noting that the insurance policy carried by the School District would terminate July 1, 1976. Since the National Division actually owns the property, now that it has been released by the School District, it was suggested that they be appraised of the insurance situation.

Rev. Bill Trudeau moved that "the resumption of responsibility for the S. E. Alaska Camp is referred to the Conference Council on Ministries for consideration at its Fall 1976 meeting; that the Board of Trustees meet during conference to make initial recommendations to the National Division concerning what is to happen to the camp insurance as of July 1st."

Rev. Trudeau again moved, "The Council on Ministries be instructed to contact the top national Methodist expert on camping to come to Alaska to study our total camping situation with us and report to next years' conference if at all possible." It was moved, seconded, and carried, that the above Trudeau motions be referred to committee to report back to the conference.

Argetsinger Camp

Rev. Robert McNabb presented the report on the Argetsinger Camp in the Juneau-Douglas area, reviewing its immediate past history, including its financial status, and its relationship to the Forest Service and the Division of National Missions. It was moved, seconded, and carried, that action on the recommendations regarding Argetsinger Camp be deferred until Saturday.

Rev. Ac Wischmeier *moved* that the Board of Directors of the Argetsinger Camp be confirmed by the annual mission conference. It was seconded and carried.

On Saturday Robert McNabb *moved* that the Argetsinger Camp report on pages 38 and 39 of the Pre-Conference Handbook be adopted. It was seconded and carried.

ARGETSINGER UNITED METHODIST CAMP, SOUTHEAST ALASKA 1979 report

Robert H. McNabb

The Argetsinger United Methodist Camp, located 29 Mile in Juneau, Alaska, has been operating in good fashion this past year under the care and management of Steve and Maggie Jacovy. While the camp is not equipped to handle large groups in the winter months, many small groups (Girl Scouts, Elementary School classes, the Teen Club of Juneau, and some Adult Education special program groups) have used the camp during the winter, spring and fall months. Our Southeast Churches held a Church Camp for Juniors and Junior Highers for one week in August. Dan Amerson served as director for the camp of 30 students.

A block of eight weeks during the heart of the summer is taken by the Forest Service Y.C.C. and keeps many other churches from using the camp during the summer. But having the Y.C.C. there does help to pay the bills, and it is a very fine program of work and environmental education for 50 high school students from all over Alaska.

The Douglas Church and the Northern Light Church hold a family retreat over Labor Day, and have a great Thanksgiving Day dinner for all who want to participate. Work days have been held to work on some necessary maintenance programs.

Each year the Northern Light, Douglas and Aldersgate church combined for a Thanksgiving Day for activities and food.

A work team from Salem, Oregon, last summer spent a week working around the camp grounds, putting a water pipe underground to the wash house and other projects. The current project is replacing of the spring bunks with wooden bunks and the purchasing of new mattresses. This will be done before the summer is over.

OUTDOOR MINISTRY **1980**

Paul Jewell, Chairperson

I feel encouraged about our Outdoor Ministries program. The team-work across the Conference has been at a high level this past year. A special word of appreciation is due Bob McNabb and Jim Buffington who have worked diligently and effectively as we have

provided leadership training for Deans, Administrative

Committees and Counselors for people in the Argetsinger, Birchwood and Bingle areas. I also want to commend those persons within the Conference who have served on each of the Camp Committees. From my vantage point, the Committees have been serving effectively.

One highlight was the Seminars led by Dr. Bob Harvey, Director of Youth Ministries and Outdoor Ministries, Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference, held in Douglas, Anchorage, and Fairbanks. The Seminars were well attended and highly productive. Our Camps this summer will benefit from these excellent 'leadership development events.

Our statistical report, which has been circulated throughout the Conference, shows major increases in participation in the areas of Junior High, Family, Trail, Canoe, and "Other" Camps. The addition of the Senior High Camp at Birchwood with Dan Amerson serving as Dean was an important addition to our program.

The offerings for the coming summer have been expanded by the following new Camps: Rafting, Glacier Hike, and Ecumenical Family Camps sponsored by the Bingle Committee and the Resurrection Trail Family Camp and the Parsonage Family Canoe Camp sponsored by the Alaska Missionary Conference.

I will sorely miss being associated with the outstanding lay and clergy leadership involved in our camping program, but my "cup overflows" as I think of these persons who lead and counsel and administer!

Outdoor Ministries and Camping. Report to the Alaska Missionary Conference, April 15, 1981.

Jim LaBau

1980 was an active and successful year for the area of Outdoor Ministries and Camping in the Alaska Missionary Conference. A statistical summary of numbers of campers and the kinds of camping activities participated in by each of the Alaska United Methodist churches is attached to this report.

That statistical summary supports the opening statement of this report. There were many different camping and outdoor ministries opportunities provided during the year, and all local churches participated in some way.

Although there has been some decrease in use of camping facilities for Junior age campers over the past 2 years, most other camping experiences saw an increased participation. The Confirmation Camp experience has been the area with the greatest increased use.

Another successful part of the Alaska Outdoor Ministries and Camping program involves the Minority Children Camping Scholarship Fund. In the past, this Advanced Specials fund has been activity promoted by the Nome church, and Nome youth have benefited most from this fund because it provided opportunities for Eskimo and Indian children and adults to participate in camping and outdoor ministries activities, not only in the Nome area, but in a sharing experience with Birchwood Camp. Nome young people have also participated in the Birchwood Confirmation Camp as a result of use of this fund. In the final analysis, all participants who shared camping experiences with the Nome youth benefited, and it is with a great deal of excitement we look forward to the continuation of this experience.

The continued excellent camping opportunities in 1981 only need the promotion by local churches to assure that this coming year will be as successful in Outdoor and Camping ministries as the past years have been.

Report of SE United Methodist Camp Committee, 1980-81 Claudia Kelsey, Chairman

The Junior-Junior High Methodist Camp held at the Argetsinger facility, August 10-17, 1981, was an "unqualified success." Campers and staff members from Ketchikan, Sitka, and Juneau-Douglas, under Co-Directors Candy Perry and Claudia Kelsey, enjoyed a well-rounded camping experience on the theme, "The Earth Is the Lord's." "Outside" resource persons such as Maggie Jacoby, who demonstrated collect-

ing, making and use of natural dyes, and continuing the process into carding, spinning, weaving; and Dr. Roger Eichman, who gave a good background demonstration of mineral resources (including gold and gold mining) and capped his appearance by departing for one of his mining claims by helicopter; and Miss Degan, a ballet dancer and dance teacher from Seattle who enlivened the lives of the campers by teaching them ballet routines and producing exceptional skits, made the experience memorable for all.

Labor Day weekend marked a new experience in Inter-Church Family Camping, when 39 persons, representing 4 denominations, comprising 7 families and 9 individuals, enjoyed camping, working, playing and worshiping together. Kitchen chores were divided up among the families and new discoveries were made on how to cook bacon and scramble eggs for 35-40 people, etc. Two of the families present volunteered, before this camp was over, to help plan for next year's, and the date was set, then, for another Inter-Church Family Camp Labor Day weekend, 1981. (A fifth denomination has indicated plans to join with us this year)

Camp Use, June, 1980-June, 1981

USDA Forest Service, YCC Program

Methodist Youth Camp

Inter -Church Family Camp

Alaskans for Peace (Day use)

A.W.A.R.E . (Day use - a University program for women)

Thanksgiving Dinner (Day use)

Northern Light Church Council Retreat (Day)

First Baptist Church

Girl Scouts, Valley Group

Coming up:

Capital School Classroom Group

Methodist Youth Camp

(Inter-Church Family Camp)

The Camp Managers have submitted the following part of the report:

The maintenance and general upkeep of the camp facility at Eagle River is centered around the resident caretaker (plumbing, electrical, trails, garbage, etc.). Over the past four years seasonal work parties composed of local work teams and traveling groups have been able to complete the following projects:

Underground electrical line to the warehouse-workshop.

Underground water line to the bathhouse.

New pump and water system.

New cabin floors.

Improved plywood bunks with 50 new sleeping mats.

New exhaust pan and range hood installed.

Storm windows for lodge and kitchen.

Bath house drain field improved.

Lodge and outhouses given new coat of stain, 1980.

Caretaker's cabin in process of being enlarged and improved.

s/ Steve and Maggie Jacoby

On the strength of the Camp's good financial status, and with the knowledge that we need suitable housing on the camp site for a resident manager, and that we have the ideal camp managers right now, residing at the camp, and should try to provide suitable housing tor them (as well as take advantage of **their** building skills), the Camp Committee undertook a year ago to provide materials and assistance for remodeling of the managers' cabin.

With volunteer assistance of many persons, but particularly of Steve and Maggie Jacoby, Camp Managers, Pat Gorman who assisted in construction and particularly in wiring, and Frank Maier, Architect, who provided plans

as well as working on the building, an extremely suitable and desirable managers' cabin has rapidly taken shape. Plans for this summer include the cutting and use of rough siding, using a borrowed "portable saw mill" loaned by Ladd Macaulay, and the installation of a septic tank and drain field (serving the managers' cabin only).

With budget cuts pending in the U. S. Forest Service Youth Conservation Corps program, we suddenly find ourselves facing a camping season with very few commitments for camping programs and therefore a serious deficit in anticipated revenue ($7,000+). Every effort will be made to obtain more users for the Camp for this summer but we are aware that the middle of April is late to be starting on this effort. We are certain that we can build a good camping program for the summer of 1981, and this effort will begin at the same time as the one for this summer.

The Camp has always been designated as a year-round facility. We have discovered, however, that certain changes need to be made in the main lodge and kitchen if we plan to use it during the coldest winter months. The Committee has, therefore, reluctantly decided to close the Camp for outside groups during the three coldest winter months. (This is a flexible decision for winters like this past one, which didn't really have any coldest winter months.)

Since the 44 acres on which this Camp is situated is a Forest Service lease, we are governed somewhat by Forest Service decisions. One provision, which is also part of our Camping Committee's philosophy, is that the Camp is made available to all groups (space available). Another is that we pay an annual fee for the use permit for the land, and the lease is renegotiable at certain intervals.

At the present time the Forest Service is "rathering" about changing its methods of determining the amount of the fee. This process has been going on for at least two years and has not yet been decided, so we are still operating under the old lease which is being extended each year until the Forest Service makes up its mind. The present fee is $47 per year, but we have been informed that the fee may go up a great deal in the next lease - or not at all, according to how they decide to make the assessment.

In the meantime, as a result of physical inspection of the Camp, the Forest Service has sent a list of improvements, repairs and maintenance items which they feel should be made to bring our camp up to safe and operating standards. We agree with their recommendations and are hoping to organize local work parties to work on these during the summer months.

CAMPING REPORTS 1981

Southeast Camp Committee - Claudia Kelsey, Chairman

The Methodist Youth Camp held at the Argetsinger facility May 31 to June 7, 1981, on

the theme of "Have You Seen Jesus My Lord?" was organized into three camps within a camp. The Senior High group was led by Dan Amerson, Pastor of the Sitka United Methodist Church, and Jackie DeJenero. The Junior High group was led by Pastor Ollie Auchenpaugh, of Ketchikan United Methodist Church, and Sharyl Westcott, and the Junior group had as it leader Art Knight, Pastor of the Douglas Community United Methodist Church.

General Camp Director was Candy Perry of Ketchikan and the cook was Maggi Jacoby. Sixty-two campers and leaders were in attendance. Response was enthusiastic, and plans were made at that time to have two separate camps during the 1982 season, one for Senior and Junior High, and the other for Juniors. Activities included silk-screening of a camp logo stating the camp theme, an afternoon hike, a visit to the skating rink and the Mendenhall Glacier.

The Labor Day weekend Inter-church Camp was made up of Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopal families, a total of 37 individuals. It rained cats and dogs, but we had a great camp, and no complaints! One family has already "registered" for next Labor Day's Camp, and a second family has volunteered to help plan the camp.

Over 90 people from Northern Light United Church, Douglas Community United Methodist Church, and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church gathered at the Camp for a semi-potluck Thanksgiving Dinner and afternoon.

Since the strength of our Youth Camps is greatly dependent on having leadership from our churches in Sitka and Ketchikan as well as Juneau and Douglas, a pattern has been established of having a camp planning meeting early in the spring which is attended by leaders from all of the churches. At this meeting the camp programs are partially outlined and responsibilities divided.

The Camp Committee has met regularly, bimonthly. Changes have been made in the regulations and requirements for use of the Camp. Regretfully, we have raised the user fee, but are still trying to keep the cost down to encourage wider use of the facility. Tentative changes are to be made to the so-called "By-Laws" at our next meeting.

Since this is a Conference Camp and since the Conference did vote on them at the time they were adopted, we are assuming that

definite action on them should wait for Conference approval.

No action has been taken by the Forest Service on rewriting the Use Permit for the land. Since the Forest Service has not yet reached a decision about a basis for assessing a permit fee, the old lease is being renewed annually at the old fee of $47 per year.

The Manager's cabin had changed from a small, cramped, inconvenient cabin to a comfortable, inviting "home". Most of the actual labor in the remodeling has been done by the camp managers, Steve and Maggie Jacoby, and a number of their friends, so that the investment in building materials has been multiplied many times for the Camp.

Report of Camp Managers, Steve and Maggie Jacoby:

During the 1981 season we had 5 church groups use our camp facilities for week-end retreats, youth camp, revivals and prayer meetings, family camps and planning committees.

Included on the list of facility improvements for the coming season are:

New foundations for several cabins

Lodge kitchen skylight panels replaced

New screening in cabins

Ski cabin moved to "winter cabin" site location

Continued improvements on caretakers' residence

Outdoor Ministries and Camping - Jim LaBau, Coordinator

1981 was another active and successful year in the area of Outdoor Ministries and Camping in the Alaska Missionary Conference. A statistical summary of numbers of campers and kinds of camping activities participated in by each of the Alaska United Methodist churches is attached to this report. In general, that report, when compared to 1979, and 1980 conference statistics, shows

that although elementary camps have decreased about 5% in attendance over the past two years, other camping activities have doubled. The big increases have occurred in high school camping activities and other outdoor ministries activities, such as church outings for Thanksgiving day, Easter and retreats. Trail camps, canoe camps, and ski camps have remained fairly constant.

As in the years past, the Minority Children Camping Scholarship Fund, made possible through Advanced Specials giving, contributed importantly to a cultural experience sharing for elementary and high school campers. Children and adult participation in the Minority Children Camping program realized real benefits. It was especially supportive to conference Eskimo and Indian children in providing those bush youth an opportunity to experience major facilitated camping experience. Nome youth were given important support by having their transportation provided to Birchwood summer camps and to Confirmation Camp.

As of January 1, 1981, there was $7,388 in the Minority Children Camping Scholarship Fund. During the year, an additional $1,598 was received and $3,772 spent, leaving a balance of $5,214 as of January 1, 1982. We are deeply grateful to those churches whose financial support makes this program possible.

There is currently an extensive Conference Camping Plan being developed. A petition at the 1981 Alaskan Missionary Conference directed the Conference Council on Ministries to develop a camping policy to include: 1) a Conference camping philosophy, 2) a plan to

assist and encourage local camp Boards to develop master plans for their camp and retreat facilities, and 3) assess financial and facility needs of each site.

As Conference Coordinator of Outdoor Ministries, I was also involved in promoting and

participating in an Avalanche Awareness Training Session where 5 skiers of a local church cross-country ski group took two days of training at Hatcher Pass. I was involved in two sessions in Birchwood Camp, leading nature walks. I coordinated and led a three-day canoe camp over the Swanson Lake system. Finally, I was involved as principal planner for the Junior and Senior High Winter Convocation at Birchwood, bringing Robert Morley of San Diego to Anchorage as a music resource person. I was Dean of that Senior High Convocation.

Plan For Development of a Conference-Wide Camping Philosophy and Program -Prepared by: The Conference Camping Task Force, June 1982

Background

At the 1981 Annual Alaska Missionary Conference, a petition was passed directing the Conference Council on Ministries to develop a comprehensive camping policy and present that policy statement to the 1982 session of the Alaska Missionary Conference. The policy

statement was to include:

1. A conference camp philosophy.

2. A plan to assist and encourage each local camp Board of Directors and the Hope Retreat

Committee in the development of a master plan for each camp/retreat facility.

3. A method and plan to assess the financial condition and need of each camp site.

The Conference Council on Ministries appointed a Camping Task Force to work on this policy statement. The Task Force which included Bob Bowers Jim LaBau Dan Amerson, Kay Abrams, Billy Still, Leta Brown, Ed Stanton, Lee Nelson, and Debbie Pitney was convened in January, 1982.

The first matter of business was to revise the Council on Ministry's Charge to one that could be responded to by the Task Force within a limited timeframe with no financial resources, and to do this in a way that involved the general participation of the Conference churches.

The Charge . . .

The Charge to the Conference Camping Task Force, as re-written is to:

Present a plan to the June, 1982 Alaska Missionary Conference for developing a Conference-wide camping philosophy and program

before June, 1983.

The following proposal is in response to that Charge.

It is recommended that this planning process be done in three phases:

1. develop a regional philosophy and plan for southeast Alaska,

2. develop a regional philosophy and plan for the rest of the state (i.e., westward Alaska),

3. combine the two regional philosophies and plans into Conference-wide products.

This philosophy and plan will accommodate those churches with limited or no local camping facilities.

1982

Petition No. 24 Establishing a Conference Camping Philosophy and Comprehensive Planning Task Force.

WHEREAS: The Alaska Missionary Conference Council on Ministries' camping force was appointed to fulfill the Missionary Conference's charge to present a plan for developing a Conference-wide camping philosophy and the first steps of a master plan and

WHEREAS: Said plan was presented to the Alaska Missionary Conference on June 3, 1982 and:

WHEREAS: Said plan was approved by the Alaska Missionary Conference and the Conference Council on Ministries given approval and budget to proceed:

THEREFORE: Be it resolved that the plan task force be discharged and that a new Conference-wide camping philosophy and comprehensive planning task force be formed; and that this new task force be made up of three sub groups:

1. Southeast Regional Sub Task Force with members (5) from:

a. Northern Light

b. Douglas

c. Sitka

d. Ketchikan

e. Western Alaska Member

2. Western Alaska Regional Sub Task Force with members (9) from:

a. Kenai Peninsula Churches (3 members)

b. Anchorage Churches (3 members)

c. Fairbanks Churches { 1 member)

d. Nome (1 member)

e. Southeast Alaska (1 member)

f. Parks Highway Parish (1 member)

3. Conference-wide Task Force with members (6) from:

a. Kenai Churches (1 member)

b. Anchorage Churches (1 member)

c. Fairbanks Churches (1 member)

d. Nome (1 member)

e. Southeast Alaska (2 members)

With members of the Conference-wide task force being appointed from the two Regional Sub Task Forces.

The proposed approach for implementing a Conference-wide comprehensive camping policy, philosophy, program, and facility evaluation recognizes that the money is not available to bring a professional planning consultant firm into the process at the going rate of $500 per day. This proposal therefore suggests retaining a trained facilitator to lead the two regional sessions (one in Juneau and one in Anchorage) and the one Conference-wide session (in Anchorage) toward the goal of establishing camping philosophies and associated facilities and program plans for each region and for the Conference as a whole.

Southeast Regional Planning

The concept envisioned here is that a member of the Camping Task Force will coordinate and convene each of these sessions as two-day meetings. The meeting in southeast will probably be held in Juneau, preferably at Argetsinger Camp. The session quorum will require one voting participant from each of the Douglas, Ketchikan, Northern Light, and Sitka churches. Any other people from any Methodist or Non-Methodist participating churches and user groups who wished to attend as non-voting participants will be encouraged to do so.

Travel funds will be made available to the Ketchikan and Sitka churches for flying one representative to and from Juneau. Travel for one westward Alaska Methodist participant will be provided to and from Juneau to establish a liaison relationship between the southeastern and westward regional plans and philosophies.

Western Regional Meeting

The first meeting in Anchorage, preferably at Birchwood Camp, will have a similar quorum arrangement, with one vote permitted for one participant of each westward Methodist church. Again, any other people from any of the Methodist or Non-Methodist participating churches and user groups who wished to attend as non-voting participants would be encouraged to do so. In order to insure balanced statewide participation, travel funds will be made available for the westward regional planning meeting for three churches to represent the Kenai Peninsula churches and one church to represent the Fairbanks churches. Other westward churches may participate if they pay their own travel. Travel for one southeastern Alaska Methodist participant will be provided to carry on the liaison relationship between southeastern and westward regional plans and philosophies. The Nome church is guaranteed input into the planning process through participation of its representative on the Camping Task Force.

The regional planning process will be to first establish a camping philosophy, and follow up with the development of a camping plan for program and facilities. It is anticipated that this process will involve two days of discussions. The Camping Task Force representative and facilitator will coordinate the planning process so that the two processes and end results will finally be aggregatable into a Conference-wide philosophy and plan.

Conference-wide Planning Meeting

Finally, a one-or two-day session will be convened in Anchorage, probably at Birchwood to merge the two regional philosophies and plans into a comprehensive Conference-wide philosophy and plan. The amount of time needed for the meeting (one vs. two

Left is the Ladd Macaulay Memorial Fire Circle

days) will be determined by the Camping Task Force in consultation with the facilitator, depending on the amount and complexity of input received in the regional sessions.

Travel funds will be provided for bringing two participants from southeast Alaska to represent the four churches. Travel funds will also be provided for one representative of the Kenai churches and one of the Fairbanks churches. Churches shall decide regionally who shall receive the travel fund support. Any other churches wishing to pay travel for a representative to the Conference-wide Planning Meeting may attain representation by doing so.

General Comments

A proxy vote arrangement is being considered to accommodate churches who desire a vote at the Anchorage meetings, but can't afford to send delegates. The facilitator will receive guidance from the local churches, the Conference Council on Ministries, the Camping Task Force, and from the National Office Camping Staff.

The facilitator will utilize the existing data presented by these groups, as well as from any previous study recommendations (i.e. the Art Harrison study). The importance of the same person being facilitator for all three sessions is strongly stressed. Travel funds and a small stipend of $50 per day will be provided to the facilitator to make his or her participation possible at all three meetings.

The budget for completing this task is $3,080. Discussions within the Task Force led to the approval of this approach given that the following conditions are met:

1. The philosophy, in the end, must reflect not just "on-site" camping opportunities, but "off-site" camping opportunities as well.

2. There should be Conference and National support in money, planning guidelines, and people.

3. We must move ahead as quickly as possible with the regional efforts.

4. Special attention will be given to the unique camping planning problems associated with the Nome, Kenai Peninsula, Fairbanks, Sitka and Ketchikan churches due to their limitations in, or absence of camp facilities.

It is recognized that the special needs of these churches which have no, or limited local camp facilities may dictate some modification of Regional and Conference-wide philosophies and plans to accommodate their special camping needs.

CAMPING REPORTS **1983**

1. Outdoor Ministries and Camping - Jim LaBau, Coordinator

The Outdoor Ministries and Camping reports, received from the local churches for this last year, indicate that 1982 was probably a rec-

ord year for those activities in the Conference. The number of total campers involved in outdoor ministries and camping was 1,787 in 1982, compared to 1,223 in 1981 and 686 in 1980. Caution must be used in interpreting these statistics, however, because over the past three years the report form has been modified to capture all outdoor ministries and camping activities, some of which were not emphasized in previous years (i.e., use of camps for Thanksgiving and Easter, etc. However, the traditional categories, such as Elementary, Junior High, and Senior High campers, have increased more than 100% since 1980, so the trend is probably real.

The major increases have occurred in high

school camping activities and other outdoor ministries activities, such as the church outings for Thanksgiving Day, Easter, day camps, and retreats. Camper participation in trail camps, canoe camps, and ski camps has remained fairly constant.

As in years past, the Minority Children Camping Scholarship Fund, made possible through Advance Specials giving, contributed importantly to a cultural sharing experience for youth as well as adult leadership. This past year, the fund was used to send eight Alaskan Native youth to the Western Jurisdictional Native American Camp in Oregon. As of April 15, 1983, there was $6,000 in the fund. We are deeply grateful to those churches who's financial support makes this program possible.

As Conference Coordinator of Outdoor Ministries, I was involved this year in promoting, providing training, and participating in local camping activities. I was also involved in several "off-site" activities, including two ski camps and a canoe camp. Also, at the direction of the 1982 Alaska Missionary Annual Conference, for the past 9 months, major emphasis has been given to preparing regional outdoor ministries and camping philosophies to serve as the first step in further long-range comprehensive planning. The cooperation of the more than 30 participants in this process has been enthusiastic and very productive. Copies of the regional philosophies and the combined Conference-wide philosophy are presented with this report, along with recommendations for further planning activity through the Conference Council on Ministries.

As part of the philosophy development process at Argetsinger Camp, emphasis was given to involving the U. S. Forest Service in planning. As a result of that involvement, excellent feedback was received regarding potential long-term lease arrangements for Argetsinger Camp, as well as our receiving some good direction for proceeding to acquire the camp land through the State Land Selection process.

The Conference owes a highly merited ''Thank you" to Judy Doverspike for contributing her talents and time as the facilitator to the philosophy development process. Equally important is an expression of appreciation to Candy Perry for her assistance in the southeast regional program.

Philosophies for Outdoor Ministries and Camping in the Alaska Missionary Conference

Philosophy developed for western and northern Alaska, February 12, 1982, at Birchwood Camp.

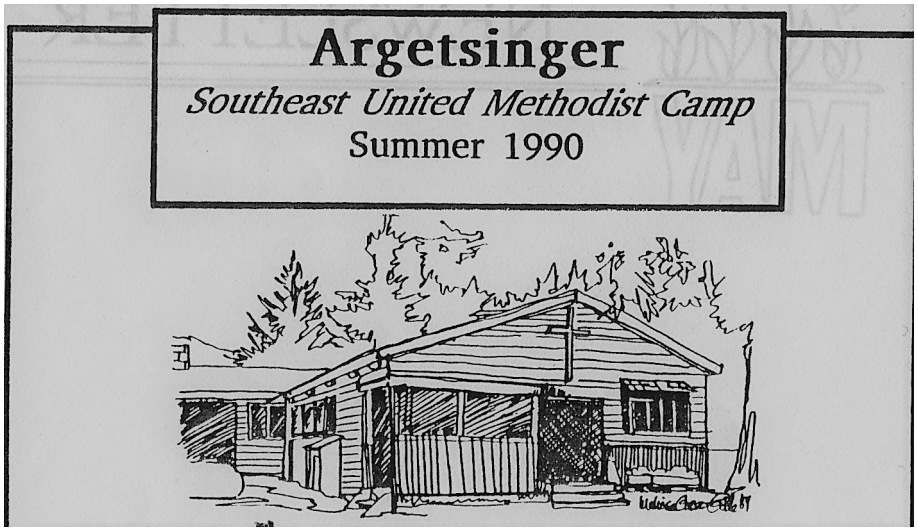
The Alaska Missionary Conference seeks to utilize the unique opportunities of natural settings to help all people grow in faith and discipleship, sense of self-worth, Christian community, and mission. Centered in God's love, outdoor ministries are a part of Conference and Local Church ministries.

Our commitment to outdoor ministries demands that we give priority to comprehensive planning, trained leadership, adaptable facilities, and adequate equipment, in order to provide for the spiritual growth, both in camps and in "off-site" experiences.

Philosophy developed for southeastern Alaska March 12, 1983, at Argetsinger Camp.

The outdoor ministries and camping philosophy for southeast Alaska embraces the concept of outdoor experiences for all persons of all ages. The outdoor ministry program will include a wide variety of activities oriented to help individuals, families, and churches realize their relationship to creation, God, each other, and the world. Activities should provide opportunities for liberating, testing, and exploring experiences to see who and where we are and to discover who and where others are.

Statewide Philosophy developed April 24, 1983 at Birchwood Camp.



The Outdoor Ministries program of the Alaska Missionary Conference seeks to utilize the unique opportunities of natural settings to help all people grow in faith and discipleship, sense of self-worth, Christian community and mission. Centered in God's love, Outdoor Ministries are a part of the Conference and the Local Church. These ministries are oriented to help individuals, families, and churches realize their relationship to creation, God, each other, and the world.

A wide variety of activities should provide opportunities for self-renewal through exploring our relationships with surroundings; and through examining and understanding values of self, others, and community.

Our commitment to Outdoor Ministries demands that we give priority to comprehensive planning, trained leadership, adaptable facilities, and adequate equipment, in order to provide for spiritual growth in camps and "off-site" experiences. AMEN

The Alaska Missionary Conference Council on Ministries recommends that the 1983 Alaska United Methodist Annual Conference take the following action regarding the status of the continuing effort in long-range comprehensive planning for Outdoor Ministries and Camping in Alaska:

1. Vote adoption of the Statewide statement of Philosophy for United Methodist Outdoor Ministries and Camping in Alaska, as presented to the 1983 Alaska United Methodist Missionary Annual Conference.

2. Endorse Alaska Missionary Conference Council on Ministries action to proceed with a search for funding in the amount of $33,000 for development of comprehensive statewide, regional, and on-site master plans for United Methodist Outdoor Ministries

in the Alaska Conference.

Argetsinger United Methodist Camp, located in Southeast Alaska - LeRoy Coon, Chm.

Report of the Camp Committee to the 1983 Session, AMC:

The camp committee met seven times in the last year. I feel that we have accomplished much in the past year, but we still have a long way to go. The four Southeast Alaska Methodist Churches (Juneau/Northern Light, Douglas, Ketchikan and Sitka) are involved and have participated in the camp in ways which have not previously been possible.

Committee member Dick Haight made a survey of the camp and submitted a six-page typewritten report of work that needs to be done on the facilities. The biggest single task before us is the replacement of foundations under all buildings. Beyond this, we are faced with the replacement of three foot bridges and the moving of one building so that it can be utilized.

Our cabin "adoption" plan seems to be working. We have one scheduled work day last fall, and another this May, both of which must be termed successful. A work-camp group from Texas is arriving in July which will be used to accomplish some of the more

pressing work. Dick Haight heads a long-range planning subcommittee to determine the future course for the physical facilities.

Last year's Methodist Youth Camps were very successful. Candy Perry's Program and Policy subcommittee has made plans and arrangements for this year's camps.

In S.E. Alaska, a site was obtained consisting of 88 acres of Forest Service land, later reduced to 44 acres. Most of the construction at the Eagle River camp was done by volunteers, both local groups and work teams from the south 48. Several individuals spent weekends and vacations working on the camp, and at the time it became a Conference camp in 1977, it was officially named the John D. Argetsinger United Methodist Camp after one of these volunteers.

OUTDOOR MINISTRIES AND CAMPING 1983-
JIM LaBau, CHAIRPERSON

Activities of the Outdoor Ministries and Camping (OM&C) area returned somewhat to normal after the previous year's intense activity in preparing a Conference Outdoor Ministries and Camping Philosophy Statement. With direction received from Annual Conference to search for funds to support Comprehensive Planning for the OM&C program in Alaska, contacts were made to that end.

Although there have been some encouraging signals during this search, there is no outside funding yet available for Comprehensive Planning. I expect to have made about 40 contacts by Annual Conference time.

The 1983 OM&C reports from the local churches showed another increase in the number of people involved in OM&C. This year's summary shows 2007 compared to 1791 in 1982, and 1227 in 1981. It is likely that some of the increase from 1981 is due to a more comprehensive report form used first for the 1982 report.

During 1983, the number of youth and children campers decreased to 1981 levels. Numbers of family campers exceeded the record number reached in 1982. Day Campers, showing up this year for the first time in the report, contributed significantly to the totals.

Trail camping returned to its previous high, as did canoe camping. Minority campers accounted for 5% of the total campers. The Minority Camping Scholarship Fund continues to be utilized by the local churches, but there is a slight decline in support of that fund from Advanced Specials giving.

This was the year to prepare or renew Advanced Specials Applications. I reapplied for the Alaska Minority Camping National Office of Global Ministries and Argetsinger Camp and Birchwood Camp for their respective Advanced Specials Applications. Hopefully, these efforts will generate more funds to support OM&C throughout Alaska.

Thanks to the availability of year-end funds, the opportunity was presented to send three people from the local camping committees to a Regional Training Conference in Oregon. Kay Abrams, Program Chairperson for Birchwood Camp, was the only person able to get away to attend. She felt the Conference was very beneficial to her.

I appreciate the support of the local churches, pastors, and camp committee members in their dedication to improving Alaskan OM&C experiences. We need to hold to our previous commitments to give priority to comprehensive planning, trained leadership, adaptable facilities, and adequate equipment to provide for the spiritual growth through OM&C, both in camps and in "off-site" experiences.

The Southeast Eagle River Camp has benefited greatly from strong support and a lot of volunteer labor from the Juneau-Douglas area, which has made possible numerous accomplishments this past year:

Encampment for spiritual renewal was the hallmark of Methodism and its frontier missionary endeavors in the American colonies, writes Robert K. Lang'at, Bishop of the Africa Gospel Church in Kenya.

Methodists perfected the use of camp meetings beyond any other denomination in modern history he wrote in the *Methodist History* journal of January 2020 on Camping Missiology.

The 1982 Junior Camp featured "A Cache of Friends" while the Senior and Junior High Camp themes were "See Me, Feel Me, Touch Me, Heal Me." They were set to enjoy music, crafts, games, worship, free time, fun, fellowship, nature at first hand, and make new friends. The Interfaith Family Camp was sponsored by the Cooperative Church Council.

"Weaving the Fabric of Community in Christ" was the theme for the Western Jurisdictional Camp Leadership Training Event in October of 1983. Inclusiveness was the topic, which included ethnic groups, seniors, and handicapped, as well as the typical youth. Property management and funding were also included.

Working on the theme "We are the Children—We are the World" Junior campers from Ketchikan, Sitka and Douglas UMC churches, and Northern Light and Aldersgate Fellowship in August 1986 enjoyed Eskimo and Indian culture and a dance exhibition at a Tlingit camp. The last day was spent on Japanese culture and traditions. Camp Director was Nancy McGuire, of the Sitka church.

One summer the Pacific Northwest VIM team reroofed a cabin, rebuilt a fire circle, rebuilt steps on dining hall, cleaned all buildings, groomed trails to cabins, constructed a handicap rail on Meier Cabin, cleaned around fireplace, prepared sign for fire circle, painted inside of fellowship hall, contributed new 3/8" drill to camp, contributed $300 to camp fund, and helped at the Douglas UMC 4th of July barbeque event.

Treat Cabin

Seven cabins have new footings and foundations (materials donated by Northwood Lumber Co.)

Roadway was graded and graveled by Bruce Morley.

Salvage materials and household goods were hauled out to the Camp from a house being demolished by Northern Light United Church.

Plans were made (drawings furnished by Frank Maier) for the remodeling of the Ski Cabin, including a 16x24-foot addition, so that the cabin can serve as a new winter cabin/Mini-lodge and craft cabin.

Juneau Receiving Home residents graveled trails, hauled and burned brush and painted cabins.

During the month of July 1983, volunteers from the Methodist Church of Garland, Texas, spent 4 days grooming the camp grounds. Projects were brushing trails, mowing grass, graveling trails, painting the bathhouse and cleaning moss off of roofs.

Don Gotschall

Maier Cabin

Frank and Judy Maier

Gotschall Cabin

The March meeting was attended by members of the Committee who represent the Sitka and Ketchikan churches, as well as Juneau and Douglas. The Planning Subcommittee made plans for this summer's Methodist Youth Camps.

At the time of renewal of the Camp Insurance, it was discovered that parts of the Camp were quite definitely undervalued. A committee was formed of Frank Maier. Steve Jacoby and Bob Hanes to do a new appraisal.

New appraisal figures: Kitchen-Lodge Building - $185,000

Manager's Residence - $57 ,600

Cabins and outbuildings - $20,000

Contents - $ 20,000

Bath house - $ 35,200

Since it has been many years since the construction of the camp's main building, the Lodge and Kitchen, there is a need to do some major reconstruction and repairs. Since a capital construction project such as this is beyond our budget's ability, a request was made to the National Division for approval as an advance Special project.

Final payment was made on a $5,000 loan from the Conference. With this money and a great deal of volunteer labor from Steve Jacoby and many other volunteers, the Camp obtained a nicely remodeled managers' cabin.

Bathhouse

Cloudberry cabin

LeRoy Coon and Kenneth Moore building bunk beds

LeRoy Coon helping build a footbridge

Outdoor Ministries And Camping **1984**

Jim LaBau, Coordinator

The good news is that Outdoor Ministries and Camping (OM&C) activities during 1984 produced a 25% increase in numbers of participants over those shown in the 1983 reports. There were 2,501 campers reported in OM&C activities in 1984 compared to 2,007 in 1983 and 1,791 in 1982. However, the big increase in 1984 was in the area of church picnics, with 1,122 participants reported in 1984 and only 284 in 1983.

The bad news is that the number of campers in camps for children and youth decreased in all camps, except in those of Senior High and Elementary camps away from Argetsinger and Birchwood camps. There were 98 Elementary and Junior High campers using Argetsinger and Birchwood in 1984 compared to 146 in 1983 and 288 in 1982. This is a 33% decrease since 1983 and a 66% decrease since 1982. The number of Senior High campers,

Conference-wide, was 70 in 1984, 85 in 1983, and 118 in 1982.

These are distressing trends in the camping attendance by youth and children. We need to again place greater emphasis on attendance of camps by our youth and children.

The number of minorities attending OM&C activities dropped from 154 to 128. We only have 1983 statistics to compare with for trends, but it may be time to re-emphasize the excellent

cross-cultural gains that are realized by making a conscious effort to include minorities in our OM&C programs.

The Minority Camping Scholarship Fund continues to be utilized by the local churches, but there was again a slight decline in support of that fund from Advance Specials giving. The applications for Advance Specials funding, made early in 1983 for the Minority Camping Fund and for special funds at both Argetsinger and Birchwood, received approval by the National Office of Global Ministries. Hopefully, funds will be made available for support

of the 2 Conference Camps for use in some badly needed facilities and equipment acquisition.

Relative to the search for outside funding for comprehensive planning at the 2 Conference Camp sites, 40 contacts made last summer produced no results. I will continue this search for planning funds. With some turnaround being noted in business economics, there may be some new hope for assistance there.

Again this past year, I have appreciated the support of the local churches, pastors, and camp committee members in their dedication to improving Alaskan OM&C experiences. We need to continue our commitments to giving priority to spiritual growth through Outdoor Ministries and Camping.

We also need to hold to our goals of completing the comprehensive planning, as well as to providing trained leadership, adaptable facilities, and adequate equipment for the spiritual growth through OM&C, both in the two Conference Camps and in "off-site" experiences.

Southeast United Methodist Camp

The Southeast United Methodist Camp, situated in a beautiful level spot surrounded by trees and mountains and within walking distance of the beach and salt water, served approximately 30 groups during the year 1984. This included 830 individual campers and 2,290 camper days. Themes of “Sow Seeds” and “Trust the Promise.”

Program Planning Meeting for the United Methodist summer camps was held in March at the Douglas Community United Methodist Camp, with members attending from both Sitka and Ketchikan as well as Juneau and Douglas. Planning has to include careful

From inside the cover:

This “Camp Log” cover was started by the 1956 Christian Adventure Camp – Junior High and Senior High Quest Group (and the first year was not used by the Junior Camps).

scheduling since many of the campers arrive and leave by ferry, and a few by plane. (Please note that the ferry schedule usually has the ferry arriving or departing at something like 3 a.m.! Transportation is furnished by local volunteers, with the very welcome use of the Northern Light United Church van when possible.)

United Methodist Junior Camp was held July 22 to 27, with 31 campers and 7 leaders attending. Nancy McGuire of Sitka was Dean, and Karen Young of Ketchikan was Program

leader. Theme of the Camp was "Stories." Senior Camp (Senior High-Junior High), with the theme "Roots" was held August 3 to 10, Carol Seckel, Dean. Contributing to the success of

both camps was a group of volunteer cooks, (one cook in charge each week, assisted by volunteers who came out for camp for the day, and frequently brought cookies or cake.)

A good deal of work went into the improvement of the camp facilities. Early in the year, it was discovered that the camp was grossly under insured. Members of the camp facilities

committee made a new appraisal of the camp buildings and contents and the insurance was raised.

One drawback to all camping programs has been the lack of communications with the "outside world." Making use of the budgeted donations from the member churches, a new

telephone system was installed in the manager's cabin, at a base cost of $3,850. (The camp is slightly less than 2 miles from the nearest phone line.) This consists of a radio phone connected to the regular telephone system at the nearest telephone (and depends on the goodwill of the owner of the home where that telephone is).

The Facilities committee, under the chairmanship of Dick Haight, drew up a work program list (typed, 5 pages, single spaced) for the summers 1984 and 1985. Forty-four of the items on the list were checked off as being completed during the summer of 1984. These included such items as replacing sills and concrete footings under the cabins, rescreening cabins, touching up with paint, creosoting posts, brushing paths and around cabins, cleaning moss off roofs, installing septic tank and flush toilet in manager's cabin, making plans for and beginning construction on remodeling and winterizing the "ski cabin," obtaining new mattresses, wheelbarrow, extension ladder, garden way cart, etc. Approximately 35 of the items are scheduled for completion during the summer of 1985.

We have the promise of two work teams from the "States" and expect to make good use of them! Also on the list is a major overhaul and improvement of the lodge-kitchen building. For this purpose the Camp is now on the approved Advance Special list for $30,000; and plans are being made for promotion of this undertaking among all our friends here and outside.

Jim LaBau prepared the following graphic with Camping Statistics:

1. Outdoor Ministries And Camping Report
January 1, 1985 To December 31, 1985

Prepared by Jim LaBau Conference Coordinator

OUTDOOR MINISTRIES AND CAMPING REPORT, -JANUARY 1, 1985 TO DECEMBER 31, 1985.

Prepared by: Jim LaBau
Conference Coordinator

	Anchorage Area:														Kenai Area:							Southeast Area:				TOTAL CAMPERS		
	Anchor Park	East Anchorage	First Anchorage	Jewel Lake	Saint John	South Anchorage	Turnagain	Chugiak	Girdwood	St Paul United	First Fairbanks	North Pole	Parks Parish	Nome	Homer	Kenai	Moose Pass	Nikiski	North Kenai	Seward	Soldotna	Douglas	Ketchikan	Northern Light	Sitka			
CONFERENCE EVENTS																												
Elementary Camp	2	10	2	3	4		4	12	1			3	7		11						6	5	7	4	7	88	60	113
Junior High Camp	1	1	2	1	2		1	3		1		4	4						2							22	38	43
Senior High Camp	1	2			8	3		7	1					1		1					4	3	9		13	53	41	59
Family Camp		0		4			7								2											13	72	45
UMW Annual Meeting	4	2	9			1	3			2	4	2			3				1						2	33	38	72
Conference Planning		4					2																		2	8	66	31
Other Offsite Events																												
Canoe Camp																										0	4	4
LOCAL CHURCH EVENTS																												
Day Camps														60												60	90	150
Elementary Camp								25		7				12					55		21					120	41	15
Junior High Camp														4					5							9	11	17
Senior High Camp																			4							4	29	26
Family Camp	93	46												25												164	194	313
Convocation(Snow cmp)		1	4		9	3		4													4		2		13	40	55	72
Confirmation Camp '85					4																		5			9	14	
Junior High Retreat		15																								15	42	55
Senior High Retreat	6	7					6																9			28	75	75
Young Adult Retreat																							12			12	11	25
Men's Retreat																					12				5	17	8	
Women's Retreat			30		6			20													22					0		
Planning Retreat	25	20								16	18															79	89	77
Other							15	12		28												12	28	45		140	155	117
Trail & Backpack Camp							16												5				2			23	74	49
Canoe Camp/Boating							20	25														1		4	65	115	50	47
Church Picnics, etc	125	20	68					20			75	80		40	63				50		32	76	86	37	55	827	1122	284
Outdoor Worship, etc.						37		165						45					75		55	50				427	120	318
TOTAL CAMPERS	257	128	115	8	33	44	74	293	2	54	97	89	11	187	79	1	0	0	197	0	156	147	160	90	162	2306	2501	2007
MINORITY CAMPERS	4	1	10	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	29	2	0			46		3	1	13	0	5	117	128	154
TOTAL STAFF	7	12	8	1	5	2	4	32	2	8	2	1	0	13	2	0			22		7	4	4	2	6	144	114	207
TOTAL EVENTS	7	15	4	3	5	5	21	11	2	5	3	4	2	9	7	1	0	0	10	0	8	7	8	5	7			

Outdoor Ministries And Camping **1986**

Jim LaBau, Coordinator

During 1985, overall camper participation in Outdoor Ministries and Camping activities relating to the United Methodist Church in Alaska, decreased by about 8 percent. The total camper number, 2,306, is not too distressing, however, because we were probably due for a leveling off, after seeing dramatic increases from 1,791 campers in 1982 to a peak of 2,501 campers in 1984.

The loss in campers was most noticeable in the Family Camping programs, both at Conference Camps and in "Off-site" Family Camping. In another area, Day Camper numbers decreased for the third consecutive year. The number of Trail Campers also decreased noticeably.

Because of illness in my family, I had to cancel a Conference Canoe Trip scheduled for June. That would not have made much of a difference, however, in the decrease in Trail Camp activities.

The good news is that the number of Elementary and Junior High campers increased in 1985, where losses were experienced there in 1984. Church participation in picnic and outdoor worship activities continued to show the strong trend (+ 1,200). Last year, that was feared to be a statistical anomaly.

Applications for assistance in getting camperships and transportation assistance for minority campers did not materialize in 1985, despite two separate contacts with each Conference

church. That fund increased from $5,700 to almost $8,000. Special emphasis will be given to use of that fund in 1986.

Some emphasis was placed on getting training for Conference Camper Leadership in 1985. However, due to tough budget constraints, the effort was not successful. There will probably be more lean years in this regards. The likelihood of obtaining the funding for Comprehensive Planning seems more elusive with each passing year. We must keep in mind that the need is still critical that we find a way to complete the Comprehensive Plans for the two Conference Camp sites.

Despite budget limits, we need to continue to give priority to spiritual growth through Outdoor Ministries and Camping.

Southeast United Methodist Camp

(Argetsinger)

The Southeast United Methodist Camp Committee had a "different" kind of year. Since the land belonged to the U.S. Forest Service, we had been using it under a Use Permit ever since the beginning of the camp in the middle 1950's.

The fee had been a nominal $47 per year, or roughly one dollar per acre. A number of years ago when our permit expired, the Forest Service notified us that they would be using a different "formula" for calculating our permit fee, but until the new formula was determined, they would renew the permit on a year by year basis at the old fee.

Then two years ago they told us that the new formula was "imminent" and so they did not renew the permit. Essentially, we were operating the camp on land that did not belong to us and for which we did not have a lease.

When we were informed of the "new formula" we found that the fee could amount to between $20,000 to $30,000 a year. With certain changes in our operations, requiring fundamental changes in our purpose for being, it was suggested we could reduce the fee to $10,000, or perhaps even $8,000 per year. Since our annual operating budget ranges from $8,000 to $12,000 a year, it was apparent that there were only two possible ways to go: either obtain title to the land, or close up shop.

The committee incorporated, with the hopes of being able to obtain title to the property, thus doing away with the uncertainties of having neither title nor lease.

At the suggestion of the Forest Service, we made inquiries of the state Department of Natural Resources, as to the possibility of obtaining the land through the state land selection process. We were assured several times that there was no way that we could be sure of obtaining the land in this manner; and we were also given to understand that without a lease or use permit, we would not have rights to the buildings and improvements made on that land, valued at over half a million dollars. Our next recourse seemed to be an attempt to obtain the land by Congressional action.

It turned out that the Forest Service was strongly opposed to this, as they feared we might "start something." Finally, with the encouragement and strong recommendations to the Dept. of Natural Resources from the Forest Service staff, we obtained information that it might be possible, after all, to obtain the land through the land selection process.

Commissioner Wunnicke, of the DNR, wanted to be sure that this would not be a problem with "separation of church and state," and so requested an opinion from the Attorney General as to whether the state could, in fact, convey the land to us.

The Attorney General's opinion stated that there was no reason why the land could not be conveyed to us. The five page opinion included a direct quote of one page that we had submitted to them, describing in some detail the history of the use made of the camp, listing all the camp users over the last few years. We were also told that, contrary to what has happened in other similar cases, there had been no one in the community who had anything but good things to say about the camp and its policies. We have now been told that the actual conveyance of title will take something like two years to accomplish.

But in the meantime, the Forest Service has renewed our permit at the previous rate of $47 per year. In a letter regarding the renewal of the permit, District Ranger Jack A. Blackwell, stated: "We are pleased that the objective of State selection and conveyance is being pursued, and are optimistic that this facility can continue to provide the community and public with extraordinary educational and recreation opportunities."

In the meantime, we attempted to operate the camp as usual. The Camp Managers report of camp usage for the year January 1 to December 31, shows 30 different user groups, numbering 815 campers and 2,254 camper days. Users included seven church groups besides United Methodist, Girl Scouts and Brownies, four school classes, P.E.O., Council on Alcoholism, Perseverance Theater, Receiving Home, University of Alaska, Hoonah Youth Center, State Department of Youth and Family Services, and others.

The United Methodist Senior Camp, with 35 campers and counselors from Juneau, Douglas, Sitka and Ketchikan, was held June 2 through 8. Junior Camp, with 35 campers and counselors, was held July 21 to 17. The usual Thanksgiving Day dinner was enjoyed by approximately 80 persons from Northern Light United and Douglas Community United Methodist Churches.

During the summer, two work teams came from the south 48 to work on the camp. A group from Denver, Colorado, of 15 young people and 2 adult counselors, brushed trails, did a general clean-up job around the camp, and built two bridges. A group of 14 adults and two young people from Holland, Michigan, under the leadership of Bob Treat, removed the old roof from the lodge, and added insulation and a new roof. This group, while paying its own expenses, also furnished a sizable amount of the money for materials. The lodge still requires a lot of rehabilitation, but is much more usable for winter events with the new insulation.

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materials. The lodge still requires a lot of rehabilitation, but is much more usable for winter events with the new insulation.

Southeast United Methodist Camp

(Argetsinger Campground)

1986 Report

Bea Shepard

During the 1986 camping season, an estimated 650 campers participated in a variety of camp experiences ranging from cookouts and campouts to cleanups. In addition to the usual Junior and Senior United Methodist Youth Camps, a sampling of user groups would include: the Capitol School outdoor education camps during the month of May, JCYE, Girl and Boy Scouts, Juneau International Folk dancers, Alaska Performing Artists for Peace, family retreats, and workshops from UAJ and Perseverance Theater.

The camp was also the site for a four week, 16 person Eagle Research team sponsored by the School for Field Studies located in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Two major cabin additions were made to the camp during the summer of 1986. Bob and Mary Treat donated a 14 X 20 "bungalow-type" cabin which will serve as housing for camp leaders or staff during the various camps and for Bob and Mary when they are visiting in the area. The cabin will not be used as housing for campers. The camp committee has officially designated the cabin "The Treat Cabin."

During August, with the assistance of a hard-working volunteer work team from the Detroit Conference, the long-awaited construction on the "Winter Cabin" was started. Work, including insulation, wiring and installation of a wood stove, has continued on this cabin through the year by local volunteers. Upon completion, the Winter cabin will serve as a winter retreat site and headquarters for cross country skiing groups. It will also add more housing for larger camps during the summer camping season, and will be used occasionally for small separate self-contained camping groups when another larger camp group is using the other camp facilities.

In addition to the winter cabin, fall and winter local volunteer work parties have worked on the renovation of the lodge, adding a new lighting system and sprucing up the interior. The dishwasher, long ailing, has been repaired, and wood cutting parties have supplied the lodge and winter cabin with enough wood to carry us through much of the present year.

We are learning anew about bureaucratic delays and necessary "footwork" in our attempts to obtain title to the land. The Forest Service has been helpful in getting us over some of the hurdles, and our local state legislators are giving us a hand with many of the others. However, after almost two years since the application was placed, we understand we are through about one and one/half of the 5 or 6 necessary steps. Many of the members of the camp committee have done a good job of "bird-dogging" the process and we feel reasonably hopeful of obtaining title to the property in another year or two.

After eleven years of outstanding service as camp managers, Steve and Maggie Jacoby have bought a house nearer town and will be leaving the camp June 15.

Jim LaBau reported for Outdoor Ministries that the Minority Children's Camping Fund was rewritten and the name was changed to Alaska Ethnic Camping and Conference Fund. Two youth from Juneau attended summer camp at Argetsinger Camp with these funds.

In late June of 1987, Steve and Maggi Jacoby resigned as managers of the SUMC and were replaced by Justin Emerson and Adrian Slater and family.

Three Day Groups used the camp, there were 17 overnight groups, and Methodist usage listed 6 events.

A group from Garland, Texas spent 7 days at the camp, painting the lodge and the Treat cabin, replacing steps to the cabins and putting in windows, doors and insulation in the new winter cabin.

Bob Treat and David John were here from Michigan and finished putting fiberglass on the sides and backs of cabin windows in place of the screens.

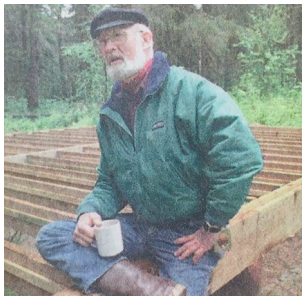
The Aldersgate youth group split and stacked wood one weekend.

Petrolane installed a 120 gallon propane tank and the camp manager's residence and intends to replace the 1,000 gallon tank at the bath house with a 500 gallon one when the present one gets low on propane.

The camp had a resident bear part time in August raiding the compost pile and garbage cans. Fish and Game provided rubber bullets which kept the bear away until a raid in September.

The largest user of the 1987 season was the Salvation Army but gave notice that they will move to the Echo Ranch in the future.

The 1988 themes were: God's Gold Medal Team; Celebrating Who We Are; and Building a Healthy Christian Family.



Don Gotschall on a very rare break contemplating once again on how to make the camp better.

1988 – The UM Foundation of Alaska Inc. gave Argetsinger Camp $70; in 1990 it gave $117.95

Ellen Northup made an entrance sign for the camp just north of the Eagle River bridge.

The camp was promoted with a display at the Nugget Mall "Outdoor Show."

1989 Petition No. 5 – The Conference created a Camping Scholarship Fund to assist campers with travel costs and participation costs

1989 – Rev. Bill McDonald offered a camping workshop in the ski cabin letting Juneau people know what a camping program could offer.

Argetsinger Camp Report

Bonnie Campbell, **1989**

The Argetsinger Camp has had a very busy and successful year. Figures indicate that approximately 1300 campers used the camp in 1988. Day use brought *255* non-Methodists and 122 Methodists, while overnights attracted 650 and 280 from these two groups. Total camper overnights for the year were 1870.

For comparison purposes, the number of groups using the camp rose from 27 to 52 last year, although the total camper overnights declined. The larger number of groups has been attributed to the availability of the new winterized ski cabin.

Two new camps have been added to the 1989 schedule of events: a canoe trip across Admiralty Island in late June with the Lutherans, and a music camp to be held in Sitka in August. A workshop to be led by Rev. Bill McDonald, Council Chair from the Oregon-Idaho Conference, will be held in early May for deans, program people and counselors. Bill will also meet with the board to provide information and help problem solve and plan for next year.

Several Volunteers in Mission persons will take part in the program this summer, including a couple from Illinois who will serve as Assistant Managers during July and August, and the Senior High Youth group from First Anchorage UMC who will help with the Elementary and Intergenerational Camps and participate in Jr/Sr. High Camp.

New managers have been selected for the camp and numerous work projects and improvements have been made. Additionally, we have been hard at work trying to secure title to the land. We feel that the camp has continued to provide a lovely setting for quality Christian programming and is also a marvelous recreational resource for the community.

Argetsinger Camp Report **1991**

Leroy Coon, Chair

Many positive things have happened this past year at the camp. We were able to get Loman and Enid Young back up here from their home in Indiana. Loman accomplished many jobs involving electrical, plumbing and carpentry while Enid painted murals and helped with cooking at the lodge. Another project that Don Gotschall and Frank Maier of the Camp Committee completed was a covered play area. New tables were purchased for the lodge and a gun was purchased for bear protection.

Building the winter cabin has made the camp a year round camp rather than just a summer camp. Aside from a little finishing work, the winter cabin is completed.

The one setback we have had is in our land acquisition. The Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources withdrew our application for State land selection because she didn't get her own way with the U.S. Forest Service. We hope there will be a new

commissioner, soon.

The following slate of officers was unanimously elected for 1990:

General Chair ..... Leroy Coon

Vice Chair ..... Dick Haight

Secretary .....Barbara Mitchell

Facilities Committee ..... Don Gotschall

Program Committee ..... .

Treasurer ..... Bea Shepard

Land Acquisition Committee ..... Bea Shepard

As of August 22, 1990 the camp land area became state land, not federal.

Camping Report **1991**

Curt Pollock and Nancy McGuire

Participants in the National United Methodist Camp leaders meeting this year received some splendid news. An announcement was made that "Each Annual Conference (including missionary conference)" with a Camp/Conference/Retreat ministry that is duly a part of the ministry of each Annual Conference when the National United Methodist Camp Leaders meeting is held February 1-5, 1991 , shall receive a gift of at least $1 ,000,000 (one million and 00/100 dollars) February 1, 2000. Each Annual Conference desiring to receive this gift for its Camp/Conference/Retreat Ministry shall ask and support the appropriate body charged with the Camp/Conference/Retreat ministry for the Annual Conference to prepare a one page plan to use the gift commencing on March 1, 2000. The one page proposal shall be in the office of the staff person having the responsibility of National Director of Camping for the General Board of Discipleship by January 1, 1993. Copies of the proposals shall be sent to the representative of the donor by January 8, 1993.

The Bishop of the Portland Area is responsible for initiating the process to write the one page proposal that will qualify our Conference to receive the gift February 1, 2000.

Argetsinger Camp Report

Richard Haight, Chair

Celebrating 35 years of organized camping at the Southeast United Methodist Camp ("Argetsinger"), the year 1990 was not free of stresses and strains. The camp manager resigned in early 1990, moving out during a severe winter period - without giving much notice, and resulting in frozen and broken pipes in the manager's cabin. We were fortunate in obtaining an excellent interim manager, who operated the camp until we obtained an experienced full-time replacement in June.

December was marked by the tragic death of long-time committee member Frank Maier. Frank was the work-foreman hired by the camp committee in 1956 to supervise the 6 week volunteer work team from the south 48 who built enough facilities to make it possible for us to start our camping programs. However, that was only the beginning of Frank's involvement with the camp. A builder and architect, he has been the designer of all the camp improvements since 1955 and a dedicated member of the committee and volunteer work on the facilities. The camp was designated as the recipient of memorial gifts and has received approximately $1400. The Camp Committee has voted to name the winter cabin for Frank Maier, the main lodge for John Argetsinger, and the small retreat cabin donated by Bob and Mary Treat the Treat Cabin.

Much time and energy was put into the effort to obtain title to the camp land, which has been used under a use-permit from the US Forest Service since its beginning in 1954. We had been informed in 1975 that changes in the use-permit arrangements were necessary, and have been negotiating with the Forest Service and the State of Alaska since then. The camp's 48 acres has been included in a 1000 acre state land-selection, so our negotiations are now with the State Department of Natural Resources, who are in the process of considering our official application to receive title.

Usage records show approximately 5,120 camper days for the year 1990. Thirteen United Methodist Groups used the camp for 575 camper days. The Intergeneration camp was attended by 37. Approximately 35 children and adults attended the Elementary Camp, and a similar number the Junior Hi/Senior Hi Camp. August 13-20 saw a backpacking trip of eleven campers and staff on the Cottonwood Trail in Kluane National Park in Canada.

A new oil tank was installed and an oil space heater placed in the manager's cabin to replace the wood stove. Using money received as a memorial to Louise Argetsinger, the committee purchased new folding chairs for the main lodge. New dining tables were also purchased.

1991 Camp Committee Officers

Chair ..... Richard Haight

Vice Chair ..... Charlie Mitchell

Secretary ..... Barbara Mitchell

Facilities Subcommittee ..... LeRoy Coon

Program Subcommittee ... Norvell Robertson

Treasurer ..... Bea Shepard

Land Acquisition Subcommittee .... Bea Shepard

Camp Manager ..... Audrey White

Petition #5 created a committee on conference outdoor ministries. See next page.

1991

Petition No. 5 -Creation of a Committee on Conference Outdoor Ministries. Adopted as amended.

Establish a committee on Conference Outdoor Ministries to be made up of six members, three laity and three clergy, including at least one representative each from Birchwood Camp Committee, Argetsinger Camp Committee, and Hope Retreat Center.

The Committee will be responsible for the general coordination of on and off-site camping and re-treat ministries of the Alaska Missionary Conference. The chairperson will be a voting member of the Conference Coordinating Council. The Committee will meet at least once a year.

Each committee will select its representative and the Nominating Committee will select the others, to be elected at the Annual Meeting. During the first year, the commit-tee will give definition to the meaning of the term "general coordination".

1991

Outdoor Ministries Committee Susan Williams, Chairperson

In January, I represented our conference at the National Camp Leaders meeting. The theme for the conference was " Powerful Partnerships". They challenged us to explore ministries with others not currently involved in our programs. We were challenged to provide" places of sanctuary". Alaska is full of God's beauty, peaceful places abound but many times we have trouble quieting the clutter of our everyday lives to hear God's voice.

We are striving to provide such places through our two resident campsites. The property committees of Eagle River of the Southeast and Birchwood need to be commended for the outstanding work they are doing. The two sites are making our sites welcoming, safe and clean for all who come.

The Outdoor Ministries committee developed a questionnaire local churches can use before embarking on a camping experience. The list of things to "think about" is based on current standards in the camping field. We hope by answering or thinking about these concepts local churches will reduce risk for their members when participating in outdoor activities. We hope to continue to look for ways to bring Outdoor Ministry opportunities to all our churches and communities.

Outdoor Ministries Committee plans to bring together representatives of Hope, Eagle River, and Birchwood in Fall 2001. We hope the meeting will enable us to partner with each other. We will have a guest presenter, opportunities for dialog, sharing of concerns and solutions, helping us strengthen the Camping Ministries in Alaska Last August, I met with the Hope Retreat Center Task Force. This committee has worked hard to develop bylaws, a board of directors, and goals for the future. Clearly the immediate need for Hope is the actual physical site. Duane Chase is taking the lead, working with a VIM team during summer 2001 to get much needed roof work completed.

I spoke to many people from around the Nation while at the Camping conference and realized that the Alaska Missionary Conference (AMC) is one of the few conferences that does not have a professional Outdoor Ministries Director working on staff.

It is such a blessing we DO have dedicated volunteers, laity and clergy who are committed to the ministries of the outdoors. The AMC churches support us through their prayers, presence, money, and services. Partnering together who knows where God will lead these ministries in the next millennium.

Camping Report **1992**

Curt Pollock

Our purpose is to enable and implement successful off-site and on-site camping and retreat ministries and to do so by providing general coordination in the form of guidance, training, funding, organization and networking.

Our committee is constituted of six members, three laity and three clergy, including at least one representative from Birchwood Camp Committee, Southeast United Methodist Camp Committee, and Hope Retreat Center. Our chairperson is also to be a member of the Conference Coordinating Council. The committee will meet once in the fall, once in spring, and once during the Annual meeting of the Alaska Missionary Conference.

As many of you know, an anonymous gift that will ultimately amount to more than $90 million has been promised to United Methodist Camping Ministries in the United States and includes $20 million to establish a national camp, conference, and retreat center in Texas, and at least 1 million to each Annual and Missionary Conference that had camping ministries at the time of the February 3, 1991 United Methodist Camping leader's meeting. The only other condition for the gift is that each conference submit, no later than January 1, 1993, a one page proposal indicating how the money will be used. Our committee will complete the proposal during the October 1992 meeting and in general has agreed to recommend that 75% of the gift be endowed, and 25% be used for immediate development of outdoor ministry. Decisions about how the proceeds are to be spent will ultimately be made by the voting members at the Annual meeting of the AMC.

Southeast United Methodist Camp (Argetsinger)

Richard Haight, Chair 1992

Corks popped and the Southeast United Methodist Camp board members toasted, "with sparkling cider," a victory: After 16 years, two federal agencies, and one state agency, ownership of the camp land is slated to be transferred to the Southeast United Methodist Camp corporation, under the Alaska Missionary Conference, effective pending a final land survey scheduled for spring of 1992.

Alaska's Commissioner of Department of Natural Resources, Harold Heinze, ended years of delay and roadblocks by signing the agreement to transfer the land. Letters from camp users, plus excellent legislative and administrative support helped the Commissioner make his decision.

The Frank Maier winter cabin, now a popular retreat for Juneauites, is a helpful resource of income to help pay the bills. Trail clearing will begin in 1992 to enhance cross country skiing for cabin users. Dedication ceremonies in Frank's memory are being planned. In addition, a plaque honoring John Argetsinger will be placed in the lodge as well as another on the Bob Treat cabin.

Southeast United Methodist Camp's program committee hosted their second annual off-campus event, in 1991, with a hike over the Chilkoot Trail. The hike, plus our intergenerational and youth camps at the campsite, attracted 125 campers and staff from the five UM churches in Southeast Alaska.

In addition, the Southeast camp hosts camp groups sponsored by other area churches, the Juneau school district and various organizations. The 1992 off-site event is a five-day Yukon River raft trip.

A substantial addition was built onto the wash house in 1991, thanks largely to a Michigan work team. When a septic tank and expanded drain field are added, Southeast Camp will install its first flush toilets and provide separate bath and toilet facilities for frauen and menschen, including handicap access.

Financially, the Southeast Camp is solvent. Income is from camp users and gifts. Out of state work teams and local church members keep labor costs down for new construction and maintenance. We encourage non-Methodist participation at the camp site.

In 1991 we brought Juneau's school district camp representative, Shirley Campbell, onto the board. Southeast UM Camp is losing the generous financial support from Northern Light United Church in 1991 as they expand their own facilities. We enjoy, however, the inspired and inspiring corps of dedicated camp enthusiasts that keep the camp an on-going success.

1993 Outdoor Ministries

Norvell Robertson, Chair

Primary among the accomplishments of the Outdoor Ministries Committee during this past program year were the following:

l) Recognition of the necessity of meeting the minimum standards of care for our camps as recommended by the National Council of Churches and United Methodist Church Outdoor Ministry literature.

2) Prioritizing emphasis for our ministry as follows: Southeast Camp, Birchwood Camp, and Hope Retreat Center.

3) Applying for and receiving preliminary approval of a million dollar grant to be received in the year 2000. Of this amount 70% is to be invested, with the assistance of outside investment consultants. Of the remainder, 10% is to go to the Camp Committee of Birchwood Camp for capital improvements, 10% to the Camp Committee of Southeast Camp for capital improvements, and 10% to be dispersed at the discretion of the Outdoor Ministries Committee for other organized camping programs. Plans for use of these discretionary funds must be submitted to the Outdoor Ministries Committee prior to disbursements of the funds. Ninety percent of the interest from the investments will be made available for use each year for conference camping programs at the discretion of the Outdoor Ministries Committee.

4) Clarification of the Alaska Ethnic Camping Fund intent -- some financial resources are available to assist ethnic or other rural persons who wish to attend camp.

Southeast United Methodist Camp (Argetsinger)

Richard Haight, Chair, **1993**

Our sparkling cider lost its fizz. The glass is dusty. We turned out in force in May to survey the land around Argetsinger Camp, the last impediment to get title to the land on which the Southeast United Methodist Camp rests. Now, a dozen years later, we believe that at last the land will belong to the AMC, but alas, we discover that the State bureaucracy moves at the same grinding speed as the Federal government. We also learn that the City and Borough of Juneau must also agree that a church owned camp at Eagle River is in their best interest. God reminds us to enjoy the lilies, but to not covet them. More next year.

The fun of chairing the Southeast Methodist Camp Board is watching others make it work. Norvell Robertson hosted the third annual off campus event - a raft trip down the Yukon River. At camp, ministers and laity from Ketchikan, Sitka and Juneau gave to many young minds the memory of fun, friends, fellowship, and a closeness to God in a wilderness experience they will remember and cherish.

No new building occurred in 1992 at Argetsinger, but in 1993 we will complete the wash house, and make certain that the lodge, Maier Cabin, major trails in camp, and some of the summer cabins are wheelchair accessible.

Meanwhile, we manage to keep our fiscal heads above water and thank God for this wonderful way to serve and to enjoy a tiny segment of our Creator's magnificent world.

1994 Outdoor Ministries

Jim Fellers

Preparation of a Dean's Manual for use at both program sites was the most significant accomplishment of the Outdoor Ministry Committee this year. The manual, prepared in its original form by the Oregon/Idaho Annual Conference and "Alaskanized"

by our committee, covers a wide range of helpful topics which include the theology of camping, program development, counselor recruitment, specific age level characteristics, health and safety issues, and appropriate procedures for each site.

The committee continued to clarify its role in relationship to the boards of the Southeast Alaska United Methodist Church Camp, Birchwood Camp, and Hope Retreat Center.

It received the good news that SEAUMCC has received title to its forty acres from the State of Alaska. This is the result of many years of effort led by Bea Shepard.

We also approved a proposal to meet annually with both boards on site to continue laying vital groundwork for distribution of the empowering financial gift in the year 2000 when at least one million dollars will be placed in the account of each annual conference's

unit, board, or agency responsible for outdoor ministry. As a part of this process, we are urging each site to begin or continue planning to achieve ACA accreditation using

Volunteers in Mission are a Super Blessing

initial funds from the gift to bring sites up to ACA standards.

A timeline is being prepared to enable each site to provide ideas and comments in the development of criteria which ultimately will be used to disburse funds from the gift.

This year has seen important strides by each board toward upgrading both facilities and programming. Each local church is encouraged to find ways to increase the use of our sites and in the registration of children and youth in the program camps. And, don't forget, there may be a place for you as a dean or counselor!

Southeast United Methodist Camp (Argetsinger)

Richard Haight, Chair

The property where the Southeast camp is located now belongs to us. The title was received April 4, Patent #13556. A potluck celebration was to be held June 18 at 6:00p.m. All of the camp's friends, supporters, and users of the camp over the years were invited to attend this event. After the potluck, they dedicated four major buildings to the memory of persons who contributed to the success and life of the camp. The main lodge is named in memory of John D. Argetsinger. The Maier (winter) cabin is dedicated in memory of Frank Maier. Bob and Mary Treat gave the camp a small self-contained cabin, which is known as the Treat cabin. Finally, the manager's house is dedicated in memory of Steve Jacoby. Steve and Maggie served as camp managers for ten years.

The 1994 United Methodist camp will have a new twist and invite non-Methodist youth to participate with our youth in our church-sponsored camps. Our camp program this year is led by Kim Poole, as she is being backed by all five Southeast Alaska United

Methodist Churches to make this an outstanding year. We are looking for new ways to make the camp and the camping program meet the needs and schedules of today's youth and our church families.

Jan Wyatt, our camp manager, was injured in an automobile accident. While he recuperates, Brad Campbell will stay in the Treat Cabin to oversee maintenance of the facilities.

A popular new addition to the camp is the Maier Cabin (“Winter Cabin”), a self-contained year-round facility. It was named for Frank Maier, a member of the camp staff and committee from its beginning until his untimely drowning death in 1990. It is usable for small groups up to about 25.

1994

9 youth and 2 adults arrived from Magadan, Russian to participate in the camp. One of the hopes of the Russian Ministry is the establishment of relationships. Next year the camp expects to send Alaska youth to the camp in the Magadan Region.

1995

The Youth Mission Institute was established with senior high youth making connections around America for spiritual formation, theology of mission, discipleship and stewardship with hands on experience.

1995 Outdoor Ministries

Jim Fellers

Many persons are asking, "What is all this talk about $1,000,000. to be received for outdoor ministries in the year 2000?" So that we might have it for future reference in the conference journal, here is the full text of the original donor's announcement:

Each Annual Conference with a Camp/ Conference/Retreat ministry that is duly a part of the ministry of each Annual Conference when the National United Methodist Camp leaders meeting is held February 1-5, 1991, shall receive a gift of at least $1,000,000 on February 1, 2000.

"Each Annual Conference desiring to receive this gift for its Camp/Conference/Retreat ministry shall ask and support the appropriate body charged with the Camp/Conference/Retreat ministry for the Annual Conference to prepare a one page plan to use the gift commencing March 1, 2000.

"The gift will be delivered February 1, 2000, to the treasurer of each qualifying Annual Conference. The Treasurer will place the gift in the account of the Camp/Conference/Retreat body of the Annual Conference. The National Director of Camping shall provide the name, address, and telephone number of the Conference

Treasurer in each qualifying Annual Conference. This list shall be sent to the representative of the donor by December 20, 1999.

"This gift is not a matching grant or a challenge gift. But it is suggested that each Annual Conference give prayerful consideration to a capital funds campaign beginning in the year 2000. What a heartwarming experience for United Methodists to begin a new century of ministry in Camps/Conferences/Retreats in this manner!"

The 1993 Journal reports the plan was submitted to the National Director of Camping by the Outdoor Ministry Committee. There are no strings attached to the gift and the plan may be modified if necessary. This year the Outdoor Ministry Committee will have established a timeline for determining criteria for disbursement of funds to SEAUMC and Birchwood, and for gathering information to set priorities for the continuing income generated by this gift. There are many creative possibilities for empowering us to enable people, through outdoor ministries, to meet and follow Jesus Christ.

This year's agenda also includes: a review of legal/liability issues; the potential for cooperative camping with other denominations; setting standards for and promoting adventure camping; encouraging sites to move toward American Camping Association accreditation; an evaluation of the Hope Retreat Center; and, final approval of a Dean's Manual.

Southeast United Methodist Camp (Argetsinger)

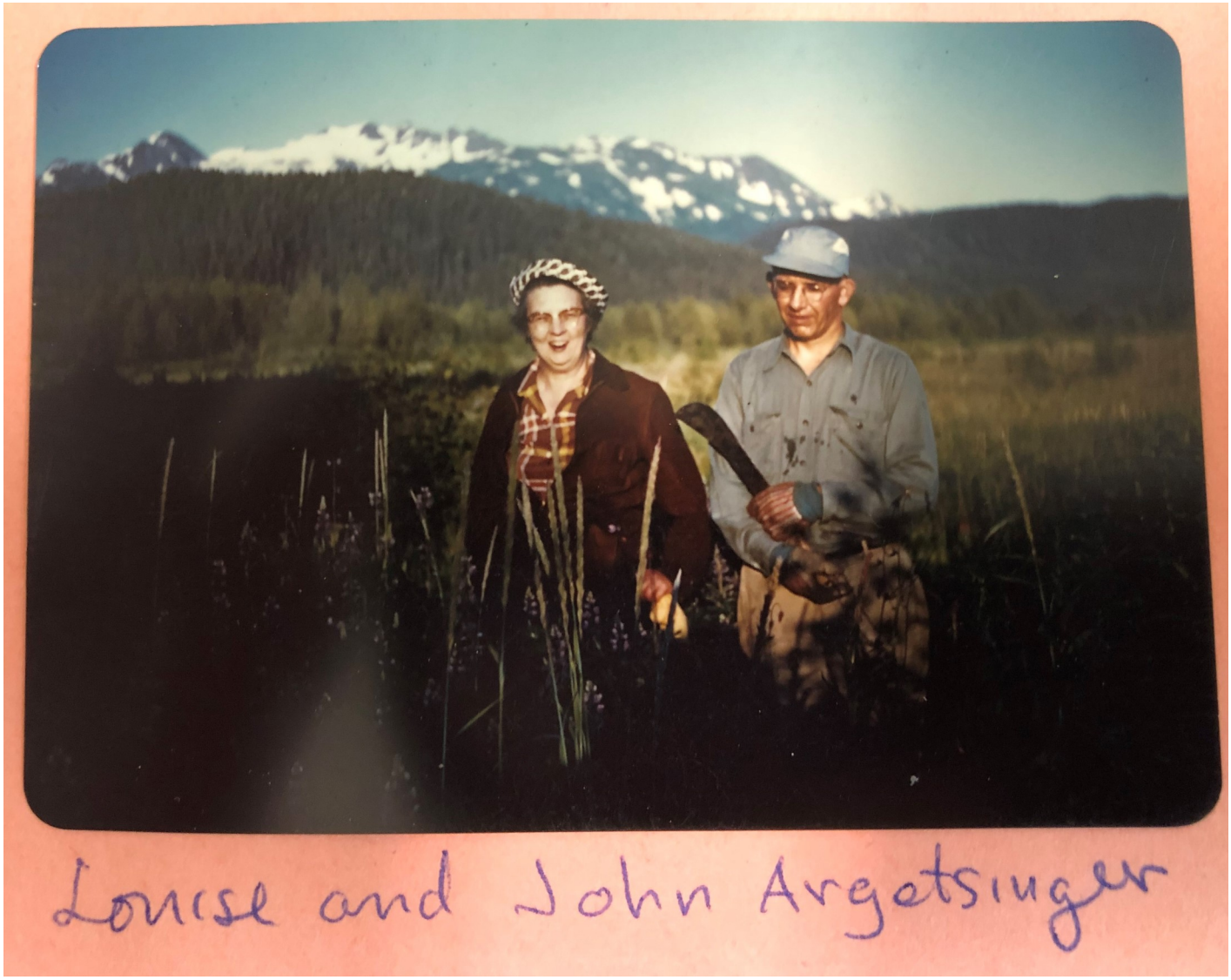
Connie Thornberry, Chair, **1995**

Summer camp 1994 increased in enrollment over past years with 113 participants. Three camps were held. The new community-wide enrollment was well-received and a Russian youth group were a positive addition to the 10-day youth camp experience. We are moving forward in developing plans and policies for safer and better camps. 1995 will introduce an additional camping opportunity called Youth Mission Institute with Alaska senior high youth working together in fellowship with youth and adults from other parts of the U.S. Christian education will include spiritual formation, theology of mission, discipleship and stewardship. Hands on local mission projects will be part of the experience.

What better way to get excited about camping than to break bread around the woodstove, share camp stories and fellowship with good friends. The camp board had an "Overnighter" at Meier cabin in sharing hopes and dreams for the future. From that experience came positive energy and real enthusiasm. Dreams for additional cabins, year-round use of the entire facility, cross country ski trails, are now forming into realities. In all our dreaming, planning, and building we are thankful for the VIM work teams who support and help, VIM individuals, and persons who have come at times when they were needed most. We feel especially thankful for Jay, Carol, Jeff, and Henry Wyatt for their hard work and faithfulness in managing the camp.

1995

Search was on for a new name for the camp. It had been named Argetsinger, named after John Argetsinger for his dedication to help make the camp a reality. Many other people helped build and run the camp and the committee decided to not single out an individual for the new name. It was also known at the Southeast United Methodist Camp. The road sign reads Methodist Camp. They didn't want to be confused with the Eagle River Scout camp across the river, as a proposal was made to name it Eagle River Camp.



1996 OUTDOOR MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Jim Fellers

The committee continues to define its role in the Alaska Annual Missionary Conference and its relationship to local site boards. Several directions have emerged which include (1) development of program and site standards; (2) consultation with the Alaska Annual Missionary Conference and local sites to refine the plan for initial and continuing use of the major gift of funds to be received February 1, 2000.

A timeline has been developed to guide this process; (3) establishment of a network of support to provide general oversight of resources and standards for camp and retreat ministry within

the missionary conference; (4) development of potential ecumenical relationships which strengthen campsites and offer additional opportunities for camping; (5) development of potential program services or events which may be offered by the committee in the future.

Goals for the next year are: (1) to develop standards which will guide local boards and local churches that offer adventure or off-site camping experiences; (2) to work with the Hope Retreat Center committee to explore options for increased development and use

of the site; (3) to continue development of stronger communication and support between the committee and local sites.

The Western Jurisdictional Camping Network Training Event for camp directors/managers, paid and volunteer staff, deans and counselors will be held at Camp Cedar Glen in Southern California, October 9-13, 1996. We are offering two scholarships each to Eagle River and Birchwood to help send persons to this quadrennial training opportunity.

Our workload will continue to increase as we near the millennium which will bring radical change to camping and retreat ministry in Alaska. For this reason, and to improve regional balance, the committee is recommending that two persons be added to its membership.

1996 EAGLE RIVER UM CHURCH CAMP (SOUTHEAST) REPORT

Connie Thornberry, Chair

This year camping takes on a new look in Southeast Alaska. We have a new name – Eagle River United Methodist Camp (Southeast)! We have new programs, including Senior High camp being held right after the close of school instead of mid summer, Elementary and Middle school camps are planned for July, plus a new fly fishing camp in August for parent and child partners. Rock climbing and white water rafting are just two new activities in the works for campers to experience.

This year camps are being led by ecumenical staff from all over the Southeast and Volunteers in Mission giving a broader leadership base to support our community summer church camp program.

The Board of Directors has been "hard at it" working on a five-year long range plan. Short range goals include building some new perimeter cabins and upgrading the main lodge along with research and planning, on how to better serve the Southeast Alaska region.

We are grateful and blessed to have Jay Wyatt and his family managing the camp and offering rich hospitality to all camp users. We are thankful for all the Volunteer in Mission work teams and individuals who gave their time and shared their resources to upgrade and improve the facilities and grounds this year.

With the prayers, dedication, and helping hands of all those who support the camp Eagle River United Methodist Camp (Southeast) continues to be a place set in nature where creation may be enjoyed and God may be praised.

1997 OUTDOOR MINISTRIES

Bob Bowers

Members of the Outdoor Ministries Committee and persons from Birchwood Camp and Eagle River Camp attended the Western Jurisdiction Network Training Event for staff and volunteers in conference outdoor ministries programs. Held at Camp Cedar Glen near San Diego, California, the workshop was helpful and stimulating as we shared with others in the Western Jurisdiction our hopes and dreams for the future as well as our concerns about present operations.

In November the Committee met at Eagle River Camp near Juneau. We began work on the development of a philosophy of outdoor ministry which will guide the future of outdoor ministry in the state. The committee continues to work with and encourage the operational sites (Birchwood, Hope, Eagle River) as they work toward accreditation by the American Camping association.

Our major concerns are expressed in two petitions: (1) active participation of missionary pastors in the life and work of our camp and conference sites, and (2) conveyance of the title to Birchwood Camp and Hope Retreat Center to the AMC Trustees so that we can couple ownership and responsibility and move toward an over-all development plan for conference outdoor ministries.

1997

Petition #4

All persons of the Alaska Missionary Conference are strongly encouraged to participate in children's and/or youth camps or retreats at least once every two years. Each church or charge in the Alaska Missionary Conference shall support their pastor and lay persons participation in camps and retreats by providing pulpit supply and other support as needed.

RATIONALE: 1. Involvement of pastors in outdoor and retreat ministries aids in the building of Christian community and discipleship. 2. Pastoral involvement enhances and encourages the camp program by stimulating local church involvement in and ownership of camp programs. 3. Historically the Alaska Missionary Conference has required its pastors to attend and participate in camps and retreats on a regular basis.

IMPLEMENTATION: Each pastor and local parish

1998 OUTDOOR MINISTRIES.

Bob Bowers presented the Outdoor Ministries report which consisted of two primary parts. A series of five graphs related to the possible gifting to each Annual Conference of $1,000,000 in 1999 was presented. The graphs illustrated the results of a survey taken during last years annual meeting. Considering the unknown status of these "gifted funds" another document, which may be much more significant in the long run, presented the Outdoor Ministries mission statement and their eight point vision for the future.

The mission and vision statement reads:

The mission of the AMC Outdoor Ministries is to provide a ministry of hospitality for all persons regardless of their age, sex, or status in life in order that they may know God's immeasurable love, come to appreciate and have reverence for God's creation, and ultimately become devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

To this end we have this vision for the future:

1. An adult retreat facility where people of all ages can experience God in a natural setting while enjoying creature comforts. 2. Stable leadership through the appropriate use of paid staff and volunteers.

3. Transportation assistance for children and youth to camping and retreat events. 4. An endowment which will support our camping programs into the future. 5. Creating an awareness and appreciation for people of all cultures. 6. Capital investment at Eagle River Camp, Hope Retreat Center, and Birchwood Camp. 7. An ecumenical approach to outdoor ministry where sites and programs are shared with Christians of other denominations. 8. A ministry that includes consistent, quality programming in a variety of settings for campers of all ages.

1997

EAGLE RIVER UNITED METHODIST CAMP {SE)
Bea Shepard

The Southeast Camp has become a very popular community resource. During 1996 we had over 75 different group and family users. After 43 years of continuous use the facilities are beginning to need more and more repair. With the dedication and expertise of the Camp Manager and the facilities committee members, much is being accomplished in this line. New appliances were installed in many areas: on-demand water heater in lodge; new (used) water heater in bathhouse; new propane heater in Maier cabin; new clothes washer and new stove in manager's cabin; several new roofs; two new bridges on trails.

The lodge fireplace chimney was finished. Almost all improvements on the camp site have been provided by volunteers and/or volunteer donations, we continue to have a camp site to be proud of. With the assistance of Henry Chiles of the PNW Conference, five VIM teams will be coming this summer to construct a second winterized cabin. The first, the Maier cabin, which houses up to 25 people, has turned out to be an important addition to the camp. This cabin makes it possible for schools and other organizations, as well as families, to use the camp any time during the year, and the cabin is seldom empty over weekends.

Inspection of the camp and activities designed to prepare it for approval for ACA accreditation are moving ahead satisfactorily. While facilities hum along, persons to run the program part of our United Methodist camping have become scarce. For this reason, we have had to minimize our UM camping activities to elementary and intergenerational groups.

A camp reunion is planned for June 1; all persons who have used the camp in any way are invited.

1998 OUTDOOR MINISTRIES

Bob Bowers

The Outdoor Ministries Committee has spent the year building upon the input which was sought and received from individuals, churches and the Annual Meeting in 1997. As a result the Committee created a new mission/vision statement which will be introduced at the 1998 Annual Meeting. The American Camping Association approved Birchwood Camp as a fully accredited program site. The Eagle River Camp Board completed a new program building and is determining what needs to be done for the camp to receive American Camping Association accreditation. Hope Retreat Center does not have the necessary funds to do the upgrading work that needs to be done for that facility. Our meeting in November at Bingle Camp near Fairbanks helped to link us to our Presbyterian brothers and sisters and provided dialog and contact for future efforts at working together.

We continue to work on philosophy, program, and facilities using the time line which was developed in 1996 for our participation in the $1 million "gift" for our camping and retreat ministries to be distributed in the year 2000. Although the actual existence and current status of the estate trust which is to fund the gift is presently unknown by leaders of the General Board of Discipleship we will continue to work as though we will receive the "gift".

Everything in our plan is needed to provide a significant outdoor ministries program. Please be assured that neither the Committee nor the Alaska Missionary Conference will make any financial commitments until our portion of the "gift" is in our trust. Please urge your churches to use our facilities and the excellent Christian camping and retreat programs they provide. Many of us began our Christian walk at a camp or conference and experiences in camp and conference settings have continued to strengthen our faith. Thank you all for your support.

EAGLE RIVER UNITED METHODIST CAMP (SE) **1998**

Bea Shepard for Larry Coon, Chair

We have been experiencing much activity at the Eagle River Camp. Last summer saw seven VIM teams assisting at the Camp, five of them working on construction of our new winter cabin. The cabin will be ready for use in early summer. Like our other winter cabin, the Maier cabin, it will be self-contained, with electricity, heat, water and cooking facilities, and will hold up to 15-18 persons. The camp is now being used pretty much the year around, and will have the possibility of three separate activities occurring simultaneously.

Serious work has gone into plans to apply for ACA accreditation. Seven members of the Camp Committee just finished a seven hour workshop on Basic Standards for Accreditation, a course required of all camps seeking accreditation.

Two editions of an Eagle River Camp newsletter have been published, with good response from receivers. The listing, compiled for a mailing list for the newsletter, shows a little over 100 group users of the camp (School classes, scouts, church groups of all denominations, square dance groups, quilters, headers, Society for Creative Anachronism, 4H, SAGA, Conservationist groups, Perseverance Theater, etc.), and over 400 individual as well as family users.

School use has grown to the point where the camp is used for outdoor education from late April through the entire month of May and several times during the months of September and October of each year.

1998

Some activities this year included horse-back riding, a beading workshop, making clay animals, sewing “beanie babies” and archery. Teens led games like Catch the Flag.

1999 Outdoor Ministries

Bob Bowers

The Outdoor Ministries Committee has spent the past year continuing its efforts of development and support of Conference Outdoor Ministries program units. Birchwood Camp has moved steadily in the direction of creating a development plan. A new building was put into use at Eagle River Camp near Juneau. Assessment for a new septic system at Hope Retreat Center was done last fall. There has been no word about the $1,000,000 gift due to be distributed in 2,000.

The Committee wishes to reemphasize its mission and vision:

The Mission of the Alaska Missionary Conference Outdoor Ministries is to provide a ministry of hospitality for all persons regardless of their age, sex or status in life in order that they may know God's immeasurable love, come to appreciate and have reverence for God's creation, and ultimately become devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

To this end we have this vision for the future:

1. An adult retreat facility where people of all ages can experience God in a natural setting while enjoying creature comforts.

2. Stable leadership through the appropriate use of paid staff and volunteers.

3. Transportation assistance for children and youth to camping and retreat events.

4. An endowment which will support our camping programs into the future.

5. Creating an awareness and appreciation for people of all cultures.

6. Capital investment at all our facilities and sites.

7. An ecumenical approach to outdoor ministry.

8. An outdoor ministry of consistent, quality programming in a variety of settings for all people.

Eagle River United Methodist Camp (Southeast)

Bea Shepard

Eagle River UM Camp (SE) has the good fortune to have a number of dedicated active members on its operating committee, as well as the assistance of many interested VIMs from around the lower 48.

Summer of 1998 saw many improvements of the camp facilities under the direction of the camp subcommittee on facilities: the finishing of the new winterized cabin, officially named the Gotschall Cabin for the members of the Gotschall family who worked on its development; building of a "state-of-the-art" outhouse for the Gotschall cabin; rebuilding of two of the sleeping cabins; a new floor in the lodge kitchen; painting and repairs on the lodge and wash house, work on the drive and trails.

A new subcommittee on program is actively preparing for the summer's camper program: an inter-generational camp on Peace with Justice and a Middle School/Elementary camp "God Is In Our Midst."

Program Committee Co-chair Shirley Campbell, who attended the national Camp leaders' training event at Epworth by the Sea, (GA) will be holding an April training session for our committee on materials from the session.

Lesley Thompson, another co-chair, held a training session for ten members of the committee on the new basic standards for ACA accreditation. The decision was made to go for accreditation in 2000, after this summer's work on remodeling the other sleeping cabins.

A new camp brochure has been prepared and is being distributed. The camp newsletter is well-received in its second volume of quarterly presentations.

Rental use of the camp has increased to the point that we can say it is a truly year-round camp.

1999

CONFERENCE COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION -Reverend Kim Poole, President, reported on a recommendation pertaining to the referral at the 1998 Annual Meeting to CCF&A and CCC concerning the six groups doing ministry within the boundaries of the AMC follows:

that the four currently designated as Advance Specials remain and that Birchwood and **Eagle River camps** be designated as Advance Specials as well, with encouragement that these ministries develop ways of relating to local churches in the AMC that will promote their programs, identify their needs, and encourage local giving through individual gifts, local church budgets and other sources.

Other recommendations would be given after the budget report. Kim distributed replacement pages 35 and 36 of the budget in anticipation of possible changes.

April 19, 2000

Ladd Macaulay was killed in a head-on collision on Seward Highway. Ladd worked as Assistant Camp Manager while in high school and became a teacher developing the Outdoor Education program for the elementary and middle schools which use of facilities for about six weeks every summer and in short periods during the winter months.

2000

Susan Williams, chair of the Outdoor Ministries Committee, introduced Dave Kobersmith as the recipient of the Birchwood Camp Award for 1999.

Claudia Kelsey and Bea Shepard were recognized. for their many years in ministry in the development of Eagle River Camp. A scholarship in their names will be awarded annually to a child or a family. This recommendation was given jointly by the Conference Coordinating Council, Council on Finance & Administration, and the Outdoor Ministries Committee.

Outdoor Ministries Committee—Susan Williams, Chairperson—**2000**

The Outdoor Ministries committee continued its work with the local camping facilities. In November '99, our Fall meeting was held in Juneau. We had a wonderful meeting with the Board of Directors for Eagle River Camp of the Southeast. We toured the facility and discussed property concerns. Eagle River Camp has made many improvements since we last visited there. Eagle River Camp raised several issues related to staffing their summer programs.

Outdoor Ministries is committed to advocate for camping programs at all levels of the conference. Outdoor Ministries will continue to encourage more collaborative efforts between our sites and different areas of the conference. Through the Outdoor Ministries budget and conference apportionments, we supported Birchwood's master plan fund raising efforts, provided money for training at Eagle River Camp, money for Hope Retreat Center Task Force, and provided scholarship money to Rural and Ethnic Camping Fund.

The February 2nd deadline passed, nothing noticeable happened. The 10-year promise of a million dollars passed unfulfilled. Reflecting on this disappointment, just the promise has brought positive change to the conference. Ten years ago people involved in camping ministry at the conference level began dreaming and visioning for our facilities and camping programs. The local sites began to look beyond their present reality to the promise of tomorrow. Visioning became free of boundaries and money constraints. Ten years later, the AMC has been blessed by those visions, hopes and dreams.

Bea Shepard, Lonnie Brooks, Dennis Holway and Kay LaBau admire the insides of some camp buildings.

Eagle River Camp built a new winter cabin, bridges have safety railings, a new bathroom has been built, new cabins are moving from plans to reality. Our dreams led to action. We may not have received a million dollars, but we have received a million blessings from the conference and others around the country, one person and one dollar at a time.

Please keep us in prayer. God is leading us to even bigger dreams and outreach. We rest in the peace that where God is leading, he will also show us the way.

Eagle River United Methodist Camp - LeRoy Coon/Bea Shepard

One of our main emphases is now preparing the camp for accreditation by the American Camping Association. There is nothing lost to us in doing this as almost everything required by ACA is something we need to do to make the camp more efficient and desirable.

We have an excellent team organization and working on the written part of accreditation are:

Dennis Demmert, former executive of Sealaska Corporation, and experienced in writing accreditation; Lesley Thompson, Executive of the Tongass Girl Scouts, and a visitor for accreditation for ACA; and Don Gotschall, retired engineer and Chair of the Camp Facilities Committee.

Plans are coming to reality by upgrading of the sleeping cabins, many of which are over 40 years old, clearing old debris, replacing the metal bunks with wood and obtaining new mattresses.

Some meetings have been devoted to discussion of effects of Parks and Recreation plans for a recreational area across from the camp and including a trail that will virtually surround our camp.

One possible value to camp is to have access to a phone line that will extend to the Parks and Recreation property.

Grant awards from the Lloyd and Elsie Nolan Trust for chairs for the lodge, stoves for the cabins and a new oil tank for the lodge and from the City and Borough, sports and recreation equipment. We are attempting to acquire l million Campbell Soup labels (Labels for Education) to qualify for a minivan for the camp.

Financial donations from friends of the camp as well as Volunteers in Mission who donated as well as labored made it possible to finish the year 1999 with a substantial balance in the bank. We look forward to teams this summer including one group from Wichita, Kansas of college age counselors to help with camp.

The Outdoor Ministries Committee met in Southeast in November for food fellowship and discussion of mutual concerns.

Went van shopping and collected box labels to help in a purchase

People in the Gastineau Human Services group spent an excess of 300-man-hours in removing years of vegetation over-growth and other projects.

2001 Outdoor Ministries Committee

Susan Williams, Chairperson

In January, I represented our conference at the National Camp Leaders meeting. The theme for the conference was " Powerful Partnerships". They challenged us to explore ministries with others not currently involved in our programs. We were challenged to provide" places of sanctuary". Alaska is full of God's beauty, peaceful places abound but many times we have trouble quieting the clutter of our everyday lives to hear God's voice. We are striving to provide such places through our two resident campsites.

The property committees of Eagle River of the Southeast and Birchwood need to be commended for the outstanding work they are doing. The two sites are making our sites welcoming, safe and clean for all who come.

The Outdoor Ministries committee developed a questionnaire local churches can use before embarking on a camping experience. The list of things to "think about" is based on current standards in the camping field. We hope by answering or thinking about these concepts local churches will reduce risk for their members when participating in outdoor activities.

We hope to continue to look for ways to bring Outdoor Ministry opportunities to all our churches and communities. Outdoor Ministries Committee plans to bring together representatives of Hope, Eagle River, and Birchwood in Fall 2001. We hope the meeting will enable us to partner with each other. We will have a guest presenter, opportunities for dialog, sharing of concerns and solutions, helping us strengthen the Camping Ministries in Alaska.

I spoke to many people from around the Nation while at the Camping conference and realized AMC is one of the few conferences that does not have a professional Outdoor Ministries Director working on staff. It is such a blessing we DO have dedicated

volunteers, laity and clergy who are committed to the ministries of the outdoors. The AMC churches support us through their prayers, presence, money, and services. Partnering together who knows where God will lead these ministries in the next millennium.

Eagle River United Methodist Camp

Joe Poor

What a great way to start the new millennium! Wonderful people working together to make something beautiful even better! In 2000 we made tremendous strides towards accreditation and camp improvements. We started the year recognizing that our grounds and facilities had been taken over by vegetation due to lack of maintenance, our previous church camp program had been cancelled due to lack of interest or effort, our roads were full of "chuck-holes'', some of our lodge furniture was in a sad state of disrepair, but our hearts were full of hope and a desire to make meaningful changes.

We assessed our needs, evaluated our talents and made a serious recommitment to our camping program. Now looking back I realize we were blessed with a talented team of board members, each providing unique skills and talents, which enhanced our camp program and facilities.

VIM teams are truly amazing! Wonderful caring people willing to put their life on hold and travel at their expense, fully realizing

that when they get here they will be physically expending tremendous amounts energy and effort! They are a true blessing for our camp.

We love them, thank them and look forward to their arrival each year.

Our first attempt using camp hosts and we hit the jackpot with a wonder couple from Minnesota - Glenn and Oree Robinson. With us from late May through August they survived our camp and made it better.

After a long, stressful period, we even found time to hire a new camp manager, Martin Grennan. YES! We achieved many of our goals last summer. Rebuilt our manager's cabin, trees thinned, roads rebuilt, old buildings removed, cabins rebuilt, furniture replaced and a wonderfully successful outreach camping program.

2002 Outdoor Ministries

Susan Williams

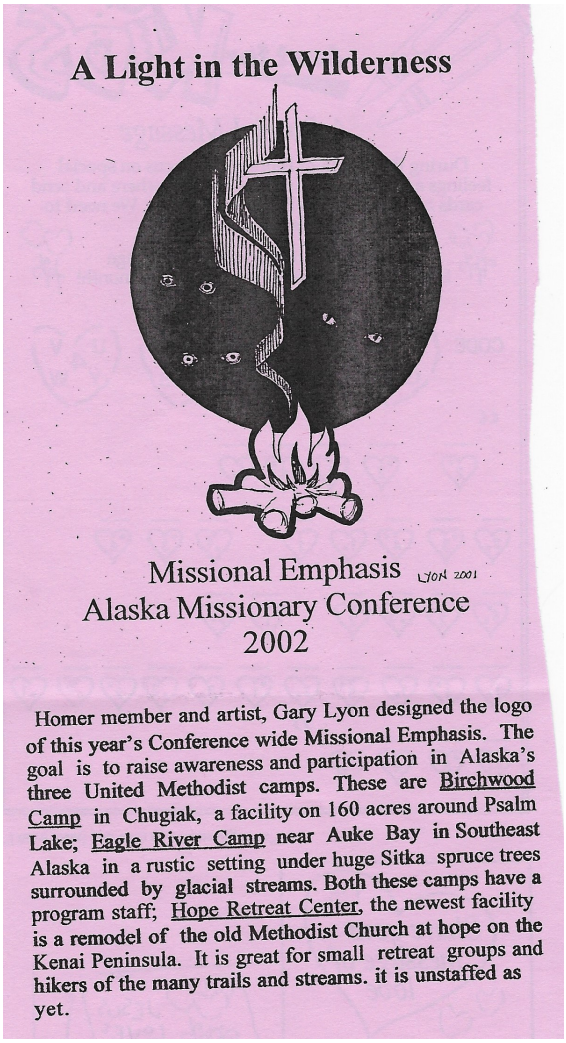
This year has been an exciting year for the Outdoor Ministry Committee. The committee devoted much of their time promoting the Conference Missional Emphasis-"A Light In The Wilderness". As a committee, we were challenged to articulate the importance of our ministry.

We developed an educational notebook about Outdoor Ministry and our facilities, a multimedia CD presentation, and worship resources. This year has helped unite our programs. The conference devoted April 21st as Outdoor Ministry Sunday focusing on the ministerial benefit of our camping programs.

The Outdoor Ministry Committee accomplished its goal of sponsoring a workshop for Camping Leaders. In February, 25 laity and clergy leaders gathered at Birchwood Camp. Paul Cogger, from California led the workshop. We had representatives from Hope Retreat Center, Birchwood Camp and Eagle River Camp of the Southeast. Through small group as well as large group discussions, we progressed from why is ministry of camping and hospitality important to what are the specific needs and benefits of the Alaska

Missionary Conference camping programs. We had discussions on Christian hospitality, volunteer management and recruitment, working with VIM teams, fund and resource development, marketing, stewardship, and how to work with local churches. This was the first time Camping Leaders had gathered together and the network that was established will reap benefits well into the future. The power of the Holy Spirit was present in that place and led to increase passion for this area of ministry. We concluded Camping Ministry is important because it " Changes Lives"!

In the summer of 2002 “A Light in the Wilderness” T=shirts were sold for $16. They were a light blue shirt with a three-color logo.



Our three camps/facilities have hard working dedicated volunteers involved in their programs. The three facilities had major upgrades this year including such things as the roof repair work at Hope Retreat Center and the creation of a covered fire circle at Eagle River Camp. Birchwood Camp completed its master plan and has spent the year developing a strategy timeline for implementation. Birchwood and Eagle River Camps continue to pursue ways to increase program opportunities available to our denomination and local churches.

Thank you to the Alaska Missionary Conference and all the local churches for your support of our ministry. Together, let's continue to go out and "Change lives for Jesus Christ the true Light in the Wilderness".

2002 Eagle River Camp - Joe Poor

Exciting things are HAPPENING! Last year our Lesley Thompson's efforts exceeded our camp capacity to the point that we had to turn children away. What a wonderful change from just a few years back when we had to cancel our program due to what we thought was lack of interest by our young people.

We are blessed to have the Wichita Kansas VIM Team come with counselors and staff to help put on our camp and the Midland Texas VIM's provides camperships for local young people they became acquainted with during their visit to our camp several years ago. What else is going on? Lots of Methodist VIM teams scheduled again this year and thanks to their efforts (and Don Gotschall's leadership, engineering and energy) our camp facilities are steadily improving.

Once again our focus is on maintaining or replacing our existing facilities. The Ladd Macaulay memorial fire circle should be completed this year, our accreditation efforts are still moving towards completion, our Board is EXCITED about and has set as a goal, the building of a camp CHAPEL in 2003, (providing we can secure the necessary funding).

Heat in our primary bathroom facilities is another goal, as well as heat in our summer cabins (currently without heat or lights). Need to keep our young people dry and comfortable while living in our "rain forest".

We have held several Board retreats to focus on a vision for the future of our camp. Some board members attended at much appreciated joint Alaska Methodist Camp retreat in Anchorage.

The Alaska State Parks which completely surround our campsite, is spending $1.9 million on improvements this year to include new trails and other improvements in our area, so we expect significant new interest in our facilities.

2002

Joe and Allison Bonham were hired to manage the camp for the summer.

2003 Outdoor Ministries - Susan Williams

The Outdoor Ministries Committee traveled to Hope Retreat Center for our Fall meeting. It was wonderful to see the improvements to the facility. The new roof: cots and windows reflected the efforts the Hope Retreat Center Board is putting into the facility. During summer 2003 many more improvements are scheduled to take place.

The Birchwood Camp, Eagle River Camp, and Hope Retreat Center representatives all shared stories from summer 2002. God blessed our programs with dedicated staffs and volunteers. Our sites were used in record numbers.

The Outdoor Ministries Committee continues to work on our quadrennial goals. We are developing a conference brochure that will highlight our camping facilities.

Ginter Gazebo

Eagle River United Methodist Church Camp, Southeast Alaska

This project was suggested by Don Gotschall, who served as Jason's mentor. It was designed so that full sized plywood could be used for the four sides of the structure.

It is located overlooking Saturday Creek. There are bench seats inside that allow for a quiet reflecting area out of the rain.

The boys were especially pleased with the perfect sized flat rock that they found near the creek that serves as the stepping stone in the gazebo.

April 21, **2002** was Outdoor Ministries Sunday at all Alaska United Methodist churches. A conference Initiative notebook was sent to churches for ideas.

2001

Rev. Dan Lush wrote "Giving young people the opportunity to hear God's call is the purpose behind the Rural Ethnic Camping Fund. This fund helps with the high cost of transportation from rural areas and tuition at Methodist Camps in a setting made for reflection away from the ordinary."

2001

New bunks were installed through a partnership with a local prison (Lemon Creek). Prisoners constructed wooden bunks for the cabins.

Outdoor Ministries committee hopes to sponsor our second gathering of Alaska Camping Leaders during the upcoming year. We continue to strive to connect people involved in camping throughout our state. It is our goal to work more closely with Regional Program Councils to sponsor events using the outdoors.

Through our conference budget. we were able to send six people to the National Camp Leaders Meeting in Monterey California during late January. LeRoy and Sandy Coon, Kim and Dave Kobersmith, Lori Staats and myself attended the five-day gathering. We attended a variety of sessions including topics such as Capitol Campaigns, Electronic Registration, Music in Camping, Working with VIM teams, or Creative Worship. We participated in team building activities with four hundred other people. The theme was centered on sanctuary - being, finding and providing Sanctuary. The worship services and Bible studies challenged us to "push off the shore and trust where God is leading us ... our world is desperately crying out for sanctuary."

Dave Kobersmith represented our conference at the Western Jurisdictional Camp Leaders meeting in October.

On June 1st there was a memorial moment held for Floyd Melvin Barton, ER Camp caretaker, who died at camp on April 12, 2003

2004 Outdoor Ministries - Susan Williams

The Outdoor Ministries Committee met in Anchorage for its fall meeting. It is exciting to hear the wonderful opportunities happening in Outdoor Ministries around the state. LeRoy Coon

shared his experience attending the National Camp Leaders Gathering held in Monterey California.

The Birchwood Camp, Eagle River Camp, and Hope Retreat Center representatives all shared stories from summer 2003. Hope Retreat Center has had a face-lift and changes continue to be made which improve the quaint site. All our facility boards should be commended for their tireless work.

The Outdoor Ministries Committee continues to work on our quadrennial goals. We are developing a conference brochure that will highlight our camping facilities. It will explain where our sites are, what kinds of facilities are available and what opportunities are available for ministries. Dave Kobersmith represented our conference at the Western Jurisdictional Camp Leaders meeting in October.

Using a portion of our budget, we hope to be able to send people to the National Camp Leaders Meeting in Georgia during late January 2005.

Outdoor Ministries Committee hopes to sponsor our second gathering of Alaska Camping Leaders during the Fall 2004 in Juneau or send representatives from our sites to a fundraising workshop in Washington. We continue to strive to connect people involved in camping throughout our state. It is our goal to work more closely with regional program councils to sponsor events using the outdoors.

We are scheduled to meet with the Bingle Camp staff to discuss how we can work together for our congregations in the Fairbanks area. We will have the opportunity to tour the facility. We continue to look for ways to reach our congregations not served by a conference

facility.

Eagle River Camp - Don Gotschall

This year winterizing the main lodge is paying off. It has been booked by meeting groups and recreation groups intermittently all winter. We have started winterizing the bathhouse. It has been insulated, re-plumbed and a furnace installed. With another year of summer work teams, the funds they bring, and a financial campaign, the bathhouse should be nearly complete by fall 2004. This will allow us to accommodate larger winter groups than an outhouse serves, and with more comfort and enthusiasm.

The two winter cabins continue to be filled most cold weekends by families and small meeting groups. Local UM use has increased from almost zero 5 years ago to a large summer youth camp, a spring "'open-up" camp, a fall intergenerational camp and several weekend youth camps.

Our camp is becoming a retreat and meeting center used by the entire community. The camp manager, Rocky Reed, is from Aldersgate UMC and besides being a great host; he provides

good care and maintenance.

2005 Outdoor Ministries - Vicki Horn

The Outdoor Ministries Committee (OMC) met under new leadership in 2004-5 to evaluate our purpose in the Alaska Missionary Conference. Specifically we determined the following as our

tasks:

l. Pursue our relationship with Pacific Northwest conference

2. Publicity/communications about camping programs/Camping Sunday

3. Encourage and enable campers to participate in Snow Camp

4. Support and nurture camping ministries

5. Liaisons from specific camps to the committee

6. Sharing ideas, promoting camping & retreat ministries

7. Retreat ministries to appeal to adults who have not been a part of camping.

From that list of tasks we established our priorities:

l. Networking - exchange ideas and resources with each other, conference & local churches, PNW, the Jurisdiction and General church.

2. Conference-Wide training for deans and congregations

3. Funding - primarily programmatic (resources/administrative/scholarship/ travel)

4. Guidance - policy/guidelines for outdoor camps: a "how to do" list

5. Organization - ensure conference camp/ retreat programs are organized; and provide program resources for camps/camping program

As a result, the OMC is researching the feasibility of an AMC camping website (link from Conference website), advocating a Conference Camping Sunday, asking all pastors to be involved in a camp or retreat each year, inviting the Regional Program Councils to designate an enthusiastic camping promoter, publishing a camping informational brochure and continuing to evaluate and refine our direction as we offer the life-changing, faith-rewarding and empowering nature of camping ministry to the Alaska Missionary Conference.

2005 Eagle River Camp - Don Gotschall

Local volunteers and 2 Volunteers in Mission (VIM) teams from the lower 48 finished major projects this year, including the bathhouse winterization/upgrade, a new sewer line, and rebuilding one corner of the Lodge. Progress was made on a new outhouse and the newest cabin.

Freezing weather and power outages were common this winter. Much effort was required to keep the lodge plumbing from freezing. The bathhouse held heat well, and survived the longest outages without freezing. The camp now meets DEC requirements for water, sewer and certified kitchen.

Upgrades have increased rental activity and camp rentals occur weekends year round; and mid-week rentals, April through November. User groups include churches, other non-profits, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, schools, 12-step programs and families. This year our camp held the first Alaskan camp for Children of Incarcerated Parents.

United Methodist Program - Four scheduled camps:

• Camp Get Ready - An ecumenical gathering of 11 Juneau churches worked together to ready the camp for the season, while enjoying fellowship, good food and time together.

• Discovery Camp-Join the Party! - Our largest Elementary Camp ever hosted over 40 children and was a collaboration of a Kansas Team with volunteers from SE Methodist churches as well.

• Camp Kelsey - Group of teens went on a backpacking adventure from the road to the shore sharing learning, living and cooperating in a community.

• Intergenerational camp - Families enjoyed Christian fellowship and fun over a long weekend, primarily attended by Aldersgate Members

2006 Outdoor Ministries - Vicki Horn

Out of the Fall & Winter Meetings, the Outdoor Ministries Committee (OMC) chose to emphasize the following:

I. Camping Sunday designated as the 4th Sunday of February with the purpose to promote our three campsites and their ministries. Brochures and bulletin inserts were sent to all AMC churches to assist in that promotion.

2. Revitalize the Bea Shepard/Claudia Kelsey Outstanding Volunteer Award and the process for selecting and celebrating that award. Invitations went out through the Conference for individuals to submit nominations to Outdoor Ministries Chair by March 31st . That recognition will occur at Annual Conference.

3. Respond to the request from Annual Conference to consider the Petition from Birchwood Camp for financial assistance to be included as a line item in the Conference budget

We have continued to encourage communication with us from the two camp sites as well as Hope Retreat Center so we can better support and promote camping and retreat ministry in our Conference.

OMC has oversight for four specific funding areas: I) the OMC program budget; 2) the Camping Program Fund - which evolved from the 2002 Conference Missional Priority; 3) the Bea Shepard/ Claudia Kelsey Award ($200/year); and 4) the Rural & Ethnic Scholarship Fund - which provides scholarship funds for our rural & ethnic folks to attend camp and participate in camping and retreat ministries.

2006 Eagle River Camp - Bunti Reed

In addition to Eagle River Camp Southeast's UMC camping programs, many faiths use our camp for praise and worship. Other users include school districts, disability groups, native study groups, 12 step programs, exchange students, scouting programs,

retreats, study groups, music and dance groups. This is the third year children of prisoners - often overlooked kids - will get to come to camp.

Many of our user groups have purposes/goals focused on improving the world. They come to camp for training, planning, becoming more effective, and for renewal, collaboration and inspiration. When we consider the difference they make in lives and in society, we must realize that our hospitality is powerful, and as we nurture and support these groups we join with God in supporting those who help to bring justice and healing to our world

2007 Outdoor Ministries - Von Cawvey

Outdoor Ministries has a membership made up of individuals dedicated to the camping ministry of the Alaska Missionary Conference. The Hope Retreat Center, Eagle River Camp, and

Birchwood Camp all have strong proponents on the committee.

Because many on the committee have never been to the Eagle River Camp, we are planning our fall meeting there. This will give us a chance to see the facilities and exchange ideas specific to the management and maintenance of our respective home camps. In addition, we will be able to discuss issues that we normally cannot address due to the limited time together at the conference wide meetings.

The committee is very appreciative of the Conference funds budgeted to Birchwood and Eagle River Camps for this calendar year. The allotted funds have greatly relieved the financial

pressures being felt by both camps and will help sustain the ministry and hospitality for which the camps are known around the conference and in their local community. Thank you for this tremendous support!

2008 Outdoor Ministries - Von Cawvey

The Outdoor Ministries Committee wishes to thank the Conference for the financial support provided to our camps in 2007 and again in 2008. The allotted funds have greatly relieved the pressures being felt by Birchwood and Eagle River Camps and will help sustain the ministry and hospitality for which the camps are known around the conference and in their local communities.

The past year has been one of learning and sharing for OMC members. The fall committee meeting was held at the Eagle River Camp in Southeast. This provided members a chance to meet the Camp's governing committee/directors, to see and appreciate the camp facilities, and to witness firsthand the tremendous results achieved by a dedicated group of wonderful volunteers.

Eagle River Camp is worried about their future. Operating costs continue to increase while camp guests continue to decline. Although Birchwood Camp operates with a larger budget, it faces many of the same challenges. Discussion at the winter OMC meeting focused on the need to set a new direction for the camps, with all three entities (Birchwood, Eagle River, and Hope Retreat Center) needing to work together, possibly under the direct governance of the OMC or a conference appointed executive director. Future work of the Committee will center on developing such an approach. Your prayers and ideas are appreciated as we work toward the common goal of providing Outdoor Ministry opportunities to the Alaska Missionary Conference.

Claudia Juanita Dona Kelsey died December 6, 2007 at the age of 95.

2009 Outdoor Ministries - Von Cawvey

In the face of the dismal economy, it would be easy to throw up one's arms and start cutting programs, but history teaches us that opportunity can often be found at such times. Your Outdoor Ministries Committee is optimistic that such opportunities are out there and we are working to discern our mission at this time.

One opportunity that has presented itself is working with Alan Rogstad, the Executive Director for Camping and Retreat Ministries, of the Pacific NW Conference. A dialogue was started with Alan early this year. By the time of the Annual Conference, we hope to have brought Alan north for a tour of Birchwood Camp, Eagle River Camp, and Hope Retreat Center. The boards and committees of all three facilities will be picking Alan's brain for ideas on how to expand our ministries while living within our financial means. We hope to establish a relationship with PNW that might lead to designing programs specific to each area that will provide campers from both conferences with more locale and programming choices.

The Outdoor Ministries Committee wishes to thank the Conference for the financial support provided to our camps this past year. This annual funding has greatly relieved the financial pressures of Birchwood and Eagle River Camps as well as the Hope Retreat Center, and helps sustain the ministry and hospitality of the camps within the conference and the local communities. As always, your prayers and ideas are appreciated as we work toward the common goal of providing Outdoor Ministry opportunities to the Alaska United Methodist Conference.

There were 3000 campers in 2009

2010 Outdoor Ministries - Von Cawvey

Outdoor ministries are alive and well in Alaska. Eagle River Camp, Hope Retreat Center, and Birchwood Camp are all working together to promote camping as a way to build community and see God in our natural world.

Alan Rogstad, the Executive Director for Camping and Retreat Ministries in the Pacific NW Conference, accepted our invitation to evaluate and comment on our camps and programming. He visited all 3 facilities over a long weekend and shared meals with the Birchwood and Eagle River Board members. He had several ideas during his visit, and after a few days of reflection, sent back several pages of additional suggestions. Our fall meeting was largely spent working through Alan's notes and developing action plans for each of our facilities.

We are in the process of developing a colorful Conference-wide camping brochure that will have a multi-year shelf-life and feature the programming and activities available at each camp and retreat center. Along with the churches here, we hope to share this brochure with PNW, giving their youth an opportunity to experience camping in Alaska.

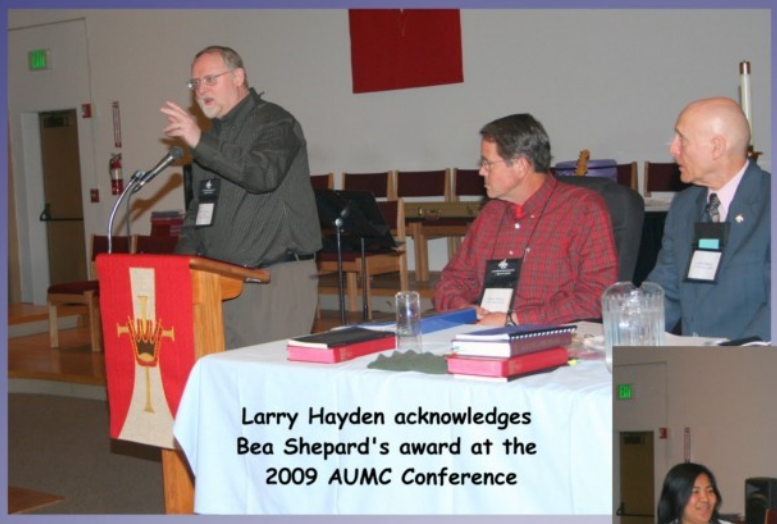
We again wish to thank the Conference for the financial support provided to our camps this past year. The higher fuel bills at the Hope Retreat Center have been eased and Eagle River and Birchwood are expanding their facilities and programs to better serve the Conference and local communities. Your prayers are always appreciated as we work toward the goal of providing Outdoor Ministry opportunities to Alaska.

2010 Eagle River Camp - Robert Chatfield

Eagle River United Methodist Camp had a very busy year in 2009. About 1594 people used the camp at least one night during 2009, and the facilities were used 11 times during the day only by 683 people. This meant an increase by 30% over the previous four years annual usage. The camps that occurred included two Methodist sponsored camps, in addition to more than twelve camps sponsored by other churches, the school district, dance groups, and social action groups.

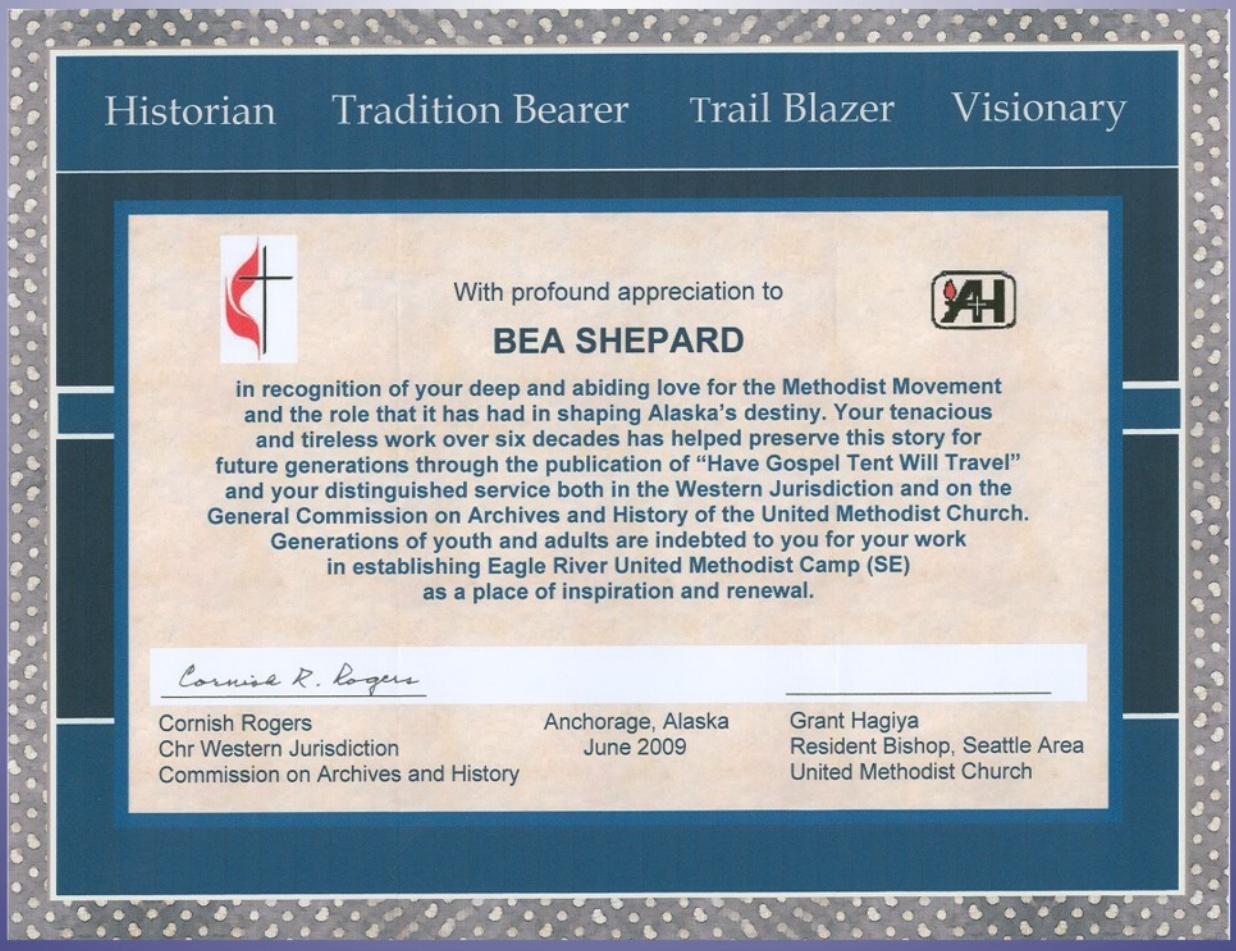
One special camp is Camp Champ which has children of incarcerated parents come out to

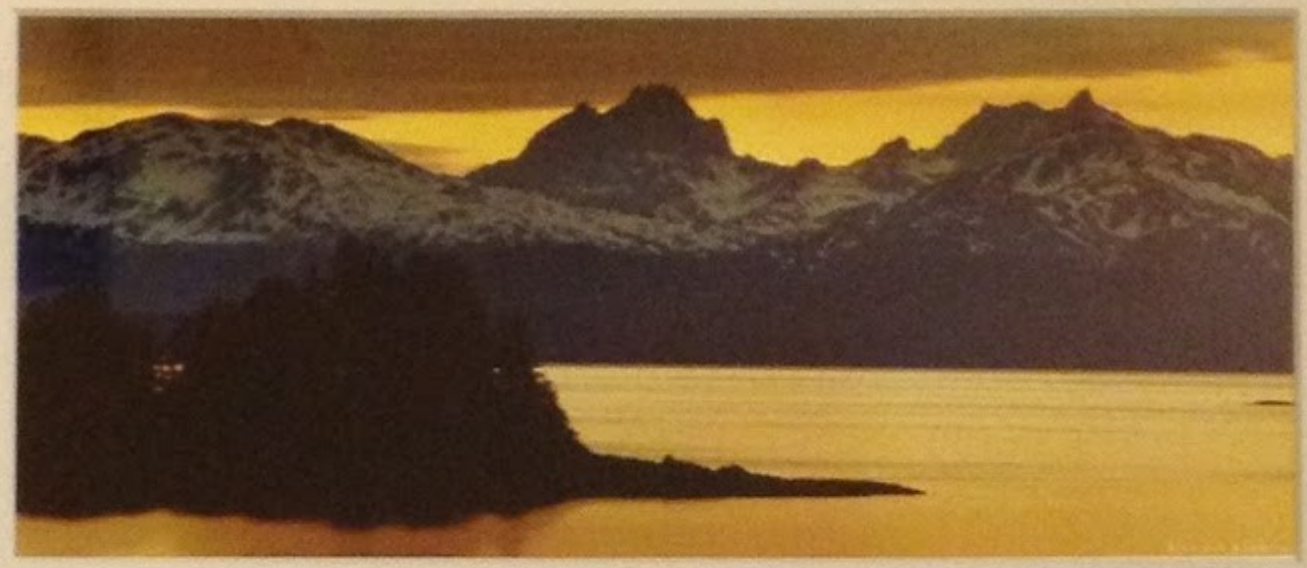
Bea Shepard's Award at the 2009 AUMC Conference



Larry Hayden acknowledges Bea Shepard's award at the 2009 AUMC Conference

Rev. Imelda Ramos and Debora Gerrish accept a 2009 Annual Conference Award to Bea Shepard, Douglas Community UMC





Certificate of Appreciation

To

BEA SHEPARD

for 46 years of outstanding service
to Eagle River Methodist Camp SE
and the Youth of Alaska.

Special Merit Award

camp for several days and nights to participate in normal camping activities out in nature. Some of the kids are terrified having never been 'out the road' from town and the change that occurs from day one to when they leave is inspirational. They come silent and fearful, then leave loud and invigorated.

The volunteer work and camp improvements included collaboration with ACTS, WORD, Saga, and Campus Crusade. Campus Crusade volunteered twice this summer, first in June, then again in July, sending altogether 42 young volunteers who donated a total of 152 volunteer hours.

Two VIM teams helped finish the two cabins built in 2008 by getting them wired, insulated, finished inside, with windows and doors trimmed, and columns and beams sanded and finished.

Through the summer, 20 new bunks (40 beds)

were precut then brought to the camp and assembled, all with volunteer effort. Since we are the last electric outlet on the Juneau electric

system, we purchased an emergency generator using several generous donations and built a shed from leftover lumber.

A major fuel oil spill this last fall was cleaned up to the satisfaction of the Department of Environmental Conservation.

This fall, the Department of Highways has been expanding the road in front of the camp and will make our current covered outdoor activity pavilion undesirable, hastening our plans to get a new one built in this summer.

2010

New cabins were built, play area was covered; new generator was added; electrical lines connected cabins; new steps were added to lodge porch

Campers always think the meals and snacks are the highlight of each camp.

Some evenings there were events like a dance workshop, s'more by the campfire, and creative talent shows.

The Southeast Regional Program Council encouraged updating the Safe Sanctuaries policies for the camp.

2010

Leroy Coon built bunk beds

Had a registration booth to promote camper programs and sale of baked goods at the Juneau Maritime Festival

2010 Outdoor Ministries –Von Cawvey

Eagle River Camp, Hope Retreat Center, and Birchwood Camp continue to work together to promote camping as a way to build community and to see God in our natural world.

With all of the distractions and demands on life, simply being at one of our camps or retreat center can calm the soul. If you have never been or if it has been way too long, I encourage you to visit and experience the spiritual renewal that a camping environment provides.

Last fall's meeting of the OMC was hosted by the Eagle River Camp in Southeast, just north of Juneau. This meeting provided members a chance to meet the Camp's gov-

erning body, to see and appreciate the facilities, and to share ideas on programming and management.

The hospitality in Southeast is always superb and very much appreciated by the visitors. One of our big efforts this past year was to put the final touches on our Conference camping brochure –look for it soon in a church near you.

The Outdoor Ministries Committee wishes to thank the Conference for the financial support provided to our camps and retreat center this past year. This funding has greatly relieved our financial pressures and helps sustain the ministry and hospitality of the camps within the conference and the local communities. As always, your prayers and ideas are appreciated as we work toward the common goal of providing Outdoor Ministry opportunities to the Alaska United Methodist Conference.

2011 Eagle River Camp –Robert Chatfield

Eagle River United Methodist Camp had several projects completed that were made necessary by inconvenient circumstances in 2010. The manager‘s cabin oil tank came off its cradle and spilled a large amount of oil that needed immediate containment and disposal. This required a backhoe to move the material, which also allowed for us to build a new drain field for the manager‘s cabin that was also desperately needed.

With donated funds and the labor of two VIM teams and local volunteers, an outdoor pavilion was completed and now we have a covered classroom space with a concrete floor and enough room to park our van in the winter. This year we will have electric power made available to three recently built insulated cabins and the pavilion.

ERUMC sponsored two camps in 2010, one for younger children, Discovery Camp, and a camp for teens, Action Camp. Discovery Camp had 34 campers, 13 CITs, 18 Counselors. Action Camp had 12 campers and 5 adults. Our camp deans have needed more support from the ERUMC Board and in 2011, we have hired a part time secretary to help with paperwork and registration forms. The two above mentioned camps are planned again for 2011.A camp for children of incarcerated parents (Camp Champ) is being newly sponsored by the ERUMC this summer and we will have to see what volunteer help and funding donations will come forward. The conference is generously helping with some of the funding in this new venture.

2012 Outdoor Ministries Committee –Von Cawvey

Outdoor ministries are alive and well in Alaska – and what more beautiful setting could we have? From the majestic rain forest surrounding Eagle River Camp to the remote Hope Retreat Center on Turnagain Arm, to the calming influence of Psalm Lake at Birchwood Camp, we have been truly blessed. If it’s been a while since you saw God in nature, you are encouraged to visit one of our camps or retreat center. God’s presence can easily be felt and is sure to renew your spirit.

We want to thank the Conference for the financial support provided to our camps and retreat center. Without this supplemental funding, it would be difficult to carry out our ministry of camping hospitality across the conference and in our local communities.

Birchwood Camp celebrated its 50th year of camping ministry this past year. The new meeting space cabin that has been under construction was officially named Fireweed Hall and was dedicated last May as part of the 50th anniversary festivities. The members of the Outdoor Ministries Committee, along with the staff and boards supporting Eagle River Camp, Hope Retreat Center, and Birchwood Camp, are all looking forward to the next 50 years of camping ministry across Alaska. As always, your prayers and ideas are appreciated as we work toward the common goal of providing outdoor ministry opportunities to God’s people in Alaska.

2012 Eagle River United Methodist Camp – Robert Chatfield

With donated funds and the labor of two VIM teams and local volunteers, ERUMC completed an outdoor pavilion and now we have a covered classroom space with a concrete floor and enough room to park our van in the winter. This year we will have electric power made available to three recently built insulated cabins and the pavilion due to last summer's efforts.

We will have some VIM teams coming to do some cleanup work around camp and especially on the path we dug around to put the electric cabling in place last summer. The dirt has had time to settle and can be smoothed out and finished up a bit.

ERUMC sponsored three camps in 2011, ·Discovery Camp (for 26 younger children), ·Action Camp (for 14 teenagers), and ·Camp Champ (for 40 children of incarcerated parents). These camps always involve a lot of counselors and support crew to make them happen, which really gives a lot of life to the facility when they are going on. We hope to have the three camps again this year sponsored by ERUMC. There are other groups: ACTS, WORD, Girl Scouts, school classes, some family activities at the camp all year long that make it so important to our community.

One of the most important new changes at ERUMC has been the new camp manager, Philip Montgomery and his wife Carol. They have been learning a lot about Alaska and our camp through the less busy days and long nights of winter. They also bring years of camp managing experience from the lower 48. We hope they choose to stay a while as they have been doing very well keeping the camp in order.

2013 Outdoor Ministries Committee –Von Cawvey

When one thinks of the great outdoors, Alaska is often the first place that comes to mind. It is so easy to see God's glory in our beautiful surroundings. Ministry incorporating the great outdoors seems like the perfect way to teach others about God's great love.

The Outdoor Ministries Committee is pleased to announce that Birchwood Camp, Eagle River Camp, and Hope Retreat Center all had a solid year of service to the Conference and surrounding communities. Attendance at summer camps has been strong and guest groups are using our facilities in ever growing numbers. We want to once again thank the Conference for the financial support provided to our programs.

This support helps in so many ways, from offsetting the high heating fuel costs of the Hope Retreat Center to providing scholarships for kids to attend camp at Birchwood or Eagle River. In keeping with the Conference initiative to reduce travel costs, Outdoor Ministries has moved from meeting semi-annually in person to meeting electronically on a quarterly basis. That should allow for increased participation from local camp board members. This interaction is expected to lead to new operating and programming ideas being implemented at each camp.

You are encouraged to visit one of our camps or retreat center. God's presence can easily be felt there and is sure to renew your spirit. As always, your prayers and ideas are appreciated as we work toward the common goal of providing outdoor ministry opportunities in Alaska.

Eagle River United Methodist Camp –Jenifer Shapland

In 2013, ERUMC sponsored two overnight camps. Both were quite a success. Camp Champ is offered to children of incarcerated

parents and has wide community support through Catholic Community Services, Juneau School District and business donations for materials and food. 39 youth were served by 7 CITs, 18 overnight adult staff, and 11 paid day staff (from CCS), for a total of 74 for 3 nights and 4 days. Discovery Camp, for children in 3rdthrough 8thgrade, had its largest attendance ever this year: 45 youth were served by 7 CITs, 19 overnight staff, and 6 day staff, for a total of 70 for 5 nights and 6 days.

VIMs from Kansas and volunteer staff from all over Alaska were critical to our success. Improvements this year included a better trail to the back cabins, electric service to several buildings, and new donated kitchen shelving. VIMs were again very helpful, as were many local church members. In 2013 we hope to improve additional camp trails.

Administrative changes: Our 501(c)3 status with the IRS has been updated thanks to KJ Metcalf. We expect the finalization in the next few months. We now have a Covenant Agreement with the Conference that clarifies our relationship regarding the camp. We also opted into the Conference-sponsored group insurance from our former Church Mutual coverage. Bob Chatfield resigned from board president position and Jenifer Shapland was elected. Bob continues to serve, as program chair.

Beatrice Louise "Bea" Shepard

May 15, 1919—November 1, 2013

2014 Outdoor Ministries Committee – Von Cawvey

Greetings from Outdoor Ministries, a group committed to teaching others about God's love through social interaction and building community in a natural setting. Although reportedly waning across the country, camping ministry is alive and well in Alaska. Guest group usage and the number of campers are increasing and by all accounts, those attending are rating their experiences highly.

Birchwood Camp, Eagle River Camp, and the Hope Retreat Center want to thank the Alaska Conference for their prayers and continued financial support. This support ensures program needs are met, camperships are provided, and staffing is in place to give kids an opportunity to learn about God's creation and amazing love.

Highlights over the past year include Eagle River Camp achieving a 501(c)3 status with the IRS. The camp also received a substantial gift from the estate of Bea Shepard. All of us in Outdoor Ministries mourn Bea's passing and we will miss her leadership and support. Both Birchwood Camp and Hope Retreat Center enjoyed the benefits of the General Board of Global Ministries' "Giving Tuesday" early in the year with gifts of $25,000 and $730 respectively.

Our periodic teleconference meetings are not only saving money for the Conference, but are allowing more frequent opportunities for interaction. Birchwood has shared ideas on hiring college kids as summer interns and we recently discussed Eagle River's idea to create a "Peace Camp" as a means of promoting peace and justice while introducing new people to the Camp

2014 Eagle River United Methodist Camp – Bunti Reed

Here at Eagle River Camp, we have an incredible camp property with good facilities and lots of passionate people supporting us. We are currently working on broadening our community support and embracing a peace emphasis while maintaining and honoring our Methodist roots and culture.

In 2013, ERUMC sponsored three overnight camps of varying lengths. Winter Camp: 3 days, Middle School Youth; Camp Champ: 4 days Elementary school "at Risk" youth, and Discovery Camp 5 days, grades 3-8. Camp Champ is offered free of charge and is a collaborative effort with Catholic Community Services (CCS) and the Juneau School District. As well, it receives donations from local businesses, churches and individuals for food and materials. There were a total of 72 youth and youth mentors, 18 overnight adult staff, and 12 paid day staff (from CCS). Discovery Camp, for children in 3rd through 8th grade occurred in July, with an attendance of 45 children and youth, and 40 adult volunteers.

VIMs from Kansas and volunteer staff from all over Alaska were critical to our success. The 3 camps served a total of 144 youth. In addition, ACTS and WORD held multiple retreats at the facility, as well as other community churches, the Juneau School district, local nonprofits, and tribal entities.

Improvements this year include a new lodge furnace, new mop sink, upgrades in refrigeration, better signage in the lodge, and a redesigned first aid area/nurses room.

The board of directors has decided to hire a half time director in addition to the stipend volunteer manager/host position. The 2014 board of directors officers are: Bunti Reed, Chair, KJ Metcalf Co-chair, Bob Chatfield, Secretary; Nico Bus, Treasurer; Laura Bruce, Bookkeeper; and Don Gotschall, Facilities Chair

LeRoy Coon died April 4, 2014

A memorial service for Rocky Reed was held October 4th at camp

2015

Outdoor Ministries Committee – Von Cawvey

With the lengthening days, the promise of summer comes to mind, along with thoughts of the upcoming camping season. We are ever grateful for the unique and beautiful setting that Alaska provides to Birchwood Camp, Eagle River Camp, and Hope Retreat Center. We have wonderful facilities that provide United Methodist kids a great place to meet God and interact in a safe outdoor environment. Ongoing support from the Conference sustains our programming efforts and is always appreciated.

It was good to see a group of campers from First UMC Fairbanks attend Winter Youth Break-Away at Birchwood this past year. We hope to strengthen a relationship with them and provide camping opportunities that will augment their own youth program. Eagle River Camp had a spring camp in March for area youth. Funds from the Conference helped transport the camp leader and several campers from Sitka, making for a more dynamic experience. Hope Retreat Center reports that Hope is now the new Girdwood, with an uptick of visitors and activities all over town. Bookings are increasing and the Center is sure to provide a great place of renewal for all who visit.

We are reminded what camping is all about by one of our winter campers who said, "To me, camp is a safe place where I can be myself and talk to friends. I would give up a vacation to Paris just for a week at camp." With support from the Conference, our

camp boards can look beyond meeting financial needs and spend more time on programming for the kids in our lives. Thank you!

2015 Eagle River United Methodist Camp – Bunti Reed

At Eagle River Camp (ERUMC), we continue to be grateful for the blessings of our terrific facility and the wonderful folks who support us in many ways. In 2014, ERUMC directly sponsored three overnight youth or children's camps of varying lengths. 1 -Winter Camp: a 3 day Bible based camp where Middle School Youth can explore spirituality and enjoy the fun, winter nature and fellowship. 11 campers and 6 staff. 2- Camp Champ: A 4 day camp for Elementary school "at Risk" youth. (Camp Champ is offered free of charge and is a collaborative effort with Catholic Community Services (CCS) and the Juneau School District) -30 campers and 20+ staff and 3- Discovery Camp a five day camp for grades 3-8, staffed by volunteers (32 campers and 18 volunteer staff).

All of our youth camps are blessed by volunteers and "counselors in training," older youth or young adults who assist counselors in all of the facets of running the camp. Also directly sponsored was camp "get ready" in which members of the local churches, friends of the camp, and the board gather to get the camp up and running for the season, it is a time of hard work, food and fellowship, occurring each May, and in November there is "Thanksgiving at Camp" with families from the 3 area churches gathering to celebrate their thankfulness and faith.

Combined the Methodist camping program at ERUMC served over 100 campers of various ages (350 camper nights, no counts on day campers) and also ministered to the 50 plus volunteers who facilitated them. And this is only the directly sponsored camp program. There has been an increase in camp use by the community, in both day and overnight campers. Camperships are up- this winter saw more use than in the recent past. Our local school district alone accounts for over 500 camper days/ nights. Other frequent users are the Girl and Boy Scouts, other area churches, non-profits, and families who have a history with the camp and hold weddings, memorials or anniversary celebrations.

Following last year's improvements in the lodge, managers cabin and nurses station, we find ourselves now engaged primarily in maintenance and planning for facilities. The "Pavilion" (our covered play area) is having great use, and we have been the beneficiary of Eagle Scout projects such as a fire circle. Reports from users are that the new pot sink, refrigerator and shelves have made the lodge kitchen even better. As one of the counselors for winter camp, I very much appreciated the new furnace!!

We work primarily with volunteers. Our board, committee members, camp manager, camp counselors, cooks and cleaners are all volunteers. This year we continued to work on broadening our community support, increasing camper nights, examining the roles of those associated with camp, seeking a camp director and in embracing a peace emphasis while maintaining and honoring our Methodist roots and culture. We continue to be grateful for conference support, and give heartfelt thanks to all who value camping ministries.

2016 Journal Outdoor Ministries Committee –Von Cawvey

Camping season always brings to mind the smiling faces of children and youth as they discover a little independence from Mom and Dad while working in community with other kids. Camping experiences teach our young folks how to function in society and how to be Christian leaders in their future adult world. I am grateful for the amazing camps and retreat center we have in Alaska. Birchwood Camp in Chugiak, Eagle River Camp near Juneau, and Hope Retreat Center all provide opportunities to meet God and grow in faith, not only for kids, but for adults who utilize these facilities as youth leaders, work volunteers, or retreat attendees.

The Outdoor Ministries Committee meets annually in person and via phone and email on

a periodic basis. Camp personnel share ideas on programming and operations throughout the year and all share ideas on how to attract financial and volunteer support from the local community. This wonderful ministry benefits greatly from the generosity of the Conference in everything from defrayment of the fuel oil cost at Hope Retreat Center to the transportation of kids from southeast communities to our Eagle River Camp. Your financial support over the years is very much appreciated

2016 Eagle River United Methodist Camp – Bunti Reed

Eagle River Camp is blessed to have a spectacular camp property with multiple facilities as well as the support of a passionate core group of volunteers and board members. We are currently working on broadening our community support and embracing a peace emphasis while maintaining and honoring our Methodist roots, faith and culture.

We are also updating our facilities, while maintaining our beloved "rustic" atmosphere.

In **2015**, ERUMC sponsored three overnight camps of varying lengths, as well as a day work camp. These included a 3 day Winter Camp for Middle School Youth; the four day "Camp Champ" for Elementary school "at Risk, or homeless youth, or youth with an FASD; Camp Get Ready, our one day work camp and our five -day "Discovery Camp"-for grades 3-8. Winter camp had 12 attendees, and was blessed to have storytelling from a local native elder, strong fellowship, okay weather and discussions on being a positive youth role model. Camp Champ is offered free of charge and was a collaborative with Catholic Community Services (CCS) and the Juneau School District. As well, it receives donations from local businesses, churches and individuals for food and materials. There were a total of 25 youth and youth mentors, 12 overnight staff and 12 paid day staff. (from CCS)

Discovery Camp for children in 3rd through 8th grade occurred in July with an attendance of 40 children and youth, and 20 adult volunteers. Volunteer staff from all over Alaska and the lower 48 (as far as New Jersey, Illinois and Kansas) were critical to the camp's success. Many of the counselors this

2017 Outdoor Ministries Committee –Von Cawvey

Eagle River Camp, Hope Retreat Center, and Birchwood Camp continue to work together to promote camping as a way to build community with others while developing a closer, personal relationship with God. This is especially needed for our children and youth in the face of all of the electronic distractions in today's fast-paced world.

From the majestic rain forest surrounding Eagle River Camp, to the remote Hope Retreat Center on Turnagain Arm, to the calming influence of Psalm Lake at Birchwood Camp, we are providing an alternative means for our young people to understand and deal with the world around them.

Our committee provides a forum for representatives from our camping and retreat entities to share ideas on personnel replacement, camp operations, and programming. The Eagle River Camp is experiencing an exchange in personnel this year with the recent resignation of their resident camp managers, Krista and Jake Jacoby. Their search for a new manager is now underway.

We want to thank the Conference for the financial support provided to our camps and retreat center. Without this supplemental funding, it would be difficult to carry out our ministry of camping hospitality across the conference and in our local communities. As always, your prayers and ideas are appreciated as we work toward the common goal of providing outdoor ministry opportunities in Alaska.

2017 Eagle River United Methodist Camp – Bunti Reed

Eagle River Camp is currently working on broadening our community support and embracing a peace emphasis while maintaining and honoring our Methodist roots, faith and culture. We are also updating our facilities, while maintaining our beloved "rustic" atmosphere. We are blessed to have a spectacular camp property with multiple facilities as well as the support of a passionate core group of volunteers and board members.

As the state improves "out the road" in Juneau, we become more and more accessible. In 2016, ERUMC sponsored multiple day and overnight camps. These include a four day "Camp Champ" for Elementary school "at Risk, or homeless youth; 2-day Camp Get Ready, our one day work camp and our five-day "Discovery Camp"- for grades 3-8.

In addition, we held a 61st anniversary celebration attended by more than 70 people, and a community camp day, where we invited Juneau to come to camp for Hotdogs, homemade ice-cream and camp games-Expecting 30-40 people, we were stunned and gratified when over 120 made the drive to camp.

Our "Camp Get Ready" work camp had 23 attendees. Camp Champ is offered free as a collaborative effort between camp and the Juneau School District. Additionally, it receives donations from local businesses, churches and individuals for food and materials. There were a total of 26 children and youth mentors, and 10-15 volunteer staff. A wonderful addition this year was help in the kitchen from the Johnson youth center culinary class.

2018

The camp's 64th year.

Eagle River United Methodist Camp E Bunti Reed, Program Chair

2017 was a busy year at camp. We welcomed new managers (Traci and Sergei) and said goodbye to Krista and Jake. (Krista is now on the camp board). In November, we completed construction of a long term goal; accessible indoor restrooms in the lodge. Members of the Juneau Methodist churches and guests who celebrated Thanksgiving at camp were truly thankful not having to hike through the snow to the bathhouse or outhouses.

In **2017** we sponsored multiple camps. These included the four day Camp Champ for at Risk, or homeless youth; Camp Get Ready, our one day work camp and our five day Discovery Camp for grades 3-8. Our Camp Get Ready work camp had 23 attendees and accomplished a huge amount of work.

Camp Champ is a free to families (by referral only) collaborative between camp and the Juneau School District. Additionally, it receives donations from local businesses, churches and individuals for food, time and materials. Children (including CITs) came from the Homeless shelter, AWARE, the Juneau Re-entry Coalition, and were also referred by OCS and public assistance. These are children who have had many life challenges in their short lives, and we were able to give them a wonderful experience. There were 20 elementary school children, 4 youth mentors, and 10D15 volunteer staff. Four kids who came to this Camp asked to come to Discovery Camp too — and did. This year's theme was "be a Hero"'. This camp was run by volunteers, several of whom were stipend. (Teacher, cook, nurse) they are all MY heroes.

In July, Discovery Camp for children 3rd - 8th grade had 40 children and youth campers, and

21 adult volunteers. Volunteer staff came from the lower 48, and other regions of Alaska. Again, many of the counselors this year had attended camp as children or had visited through other agency programs. Children came from Ketchikan, Juneau, Anchorage and Sitka (and one 10-year-old former camper from Washington State came to join us again.) The theme was "Fearless Faith." We were lucky to have a full-time pastor at camp this year. Some Quotes from Discovery Campers: "Do I HAVE to go home?" "Learning about Jesus can be fun." "I loved the singing and the food". "My favorites were the pool, the muddies, the campfires and the food and my counselors. I guess I liked it all. "This is the first time I ever read the Bible." "I like the way we say Grace here."

Also, ACTS and WORD groups, as well as community churches, the Juneau School district, local nonprofits, and tribal entities held multiple retreats at the facility. The 2017-18 board of directors are: Paul Beran, Chair; Jake Carpenter, Co-Chair; Lori Freedenberg, Secretary; Nico Buss, Treasurer; Don Gotschall, Facilities Chair; and Bunti Reed, Program chair; with directors; Beth McEwen, Krista Jacoby, Geoff Wyatt, Pastor Jason Cornish, Olga Lipson, Peggy Thomas, Steve Dahl, Chris Wallace and Jeff Wright.

We are blessed with a spectacular camp property, multiple facilities, and the support of a passionate core group of volunteers and board members.

Updated facilities

Kept a rustic atmosphere

Broad community support with a passionate core group of volunteers and board members.

2019

Chair Von Cawvey wrote that "Camping has always played an important role in the faith development of our children and youth."

He trusts that the camping activities will develop the skills needed for tomorrow's leaders in United Methodism.

The Outdoor Ministries Committee is pleased that Methodist, ecumenical, and secular groups utilize the camp year-round and appreciates the beauty and peacefulness of God's great outdoors.

Bunti Reed, Program Chair, writes that they continue broadening community support and embracing a peace emphasis while continuing to update facilities, and maintaining our beloved "rustic" atmosphere. As the state improves "out the road" in Juneau, we become more and more accessible.

This year we are updating our website to facilitate registration and payment for the camps.

2019

Outdoor Ministries Committee—Von Cawvey, Chair

Camping has always played an important role in the faith development of our children and youth. Our camp will continue to provide settings, facilities, staffing and program resources to equip our children, youth, and young adults to be tomorrow's leaders in United Methodism.

Eagle River Camp shares programming and facility management ideas through semi-annual meetings, e-mailing, and phone calls.

Methodist, ecumenical, and secular groups utilize the cam year-round. We are grateful for the dedicated staff and tremendous number of volunteers who make our outdoor ministries possible.

We trust that users appreciate the beauty and peacefulness of God's great outdoors.

Eagle River Camp continues to broaden its community support, update facilities, and offer more website options.

2020

All Camp use was cancelled by the Bishop because of safety regarding the global novel corona-virus-19 pandemic. Volunteer teams still worked at the camp to make improvements.

On September 24th Bunti Reed, Program Chair, offered the prayer focus from the Conference writing: Dear Lord, We are grateful for your never-ending presence throughout all of life, and especially during the unknowns of the current pandemic. Please hear our prayer for Eagle River United Methodist Camp, and other camps in Alaska and elsewhere. We pray that you supply camp boards, camp volunteers and camp staff with encouragement, hope, strength and peace. Give them the wisdom to make good decisions, and faith to navigate their unknown futures. Help them to find creative ways to adjust and adapt their valuable ministries to children, teens, and families. We ask that you lead them to the resources necessary to keep the camp strong, and viable, and lead others to support outdoor ministries. We ask that you help them to maintain priorities, support their dedicated staff, and maintain a strong witness…in times of both plenty and want. Where priorities should be changed and lessons must be learned, make that clear and give leaders receptive hearts. We pray that the camps that have served you, our families, and ourselves so faithfully for so long, would not just survive, but would thrive. In Jesus' name we ask this, Amen.

XII. RULES OF ORDER

R5.1014 . . . CONFERENCE OUTDOOR MINISTRIES

PURPOSE . . . The purpose of the Conference Outdoor Ministries Committee is to enable and implement successful off-site and on-site camping and retreat ministries and to do so by providing general coordination in the form of guidance, training, funding, organization, and networking.

MEMBERSHIP/ORGANIZATION . . . The committee will consist of at least eight (8) members with vote, four (4) laity and four (4) clergy, plus at least one representative each from the Birchwood Camp Committee, Southeast Camp Committee, and Hope Retreat Center. The representatives from the camps will serve with voice but not vote. Each committee will select its representative and the Committee on Nominations will select the others seeking regional balance, to be elected at the annual conference. The chairperson will be nominated by the Conference Committee on Nominations, elected at annual conference. The committee will meet at least once a year.

Camp Managers:

Rock or log covered by shells and plant growth exposed by the tide

1955-1965
John Argetsinger

1965
Laird Glasscock

1967
Harold Carter

1968
Don Fisher

1971
Randy Bradley

1974-1976
School Board

1979—for 11 years
Steve and Maggie Jacoby

Rocky

1987
Justine Emerson
Adrian Slater

1988
Mike and Angela Pretorius

1991
Audrey White

1994
Jay Wyatt

2000
Volunteer campground hosts Glen and Oree Robinson
Martin Grennan

2002
Joe and Allison Bonham

2003
Floyd Melvin Barton

2004-2008
Rocky and Bunti Reed

2008-2012
Virgil and Lori Freedenberg

2012-2014
Philip and Carol Montgomery

2014-2017
Jake and Krista Jacoby

At the time of publication of this book, December 2020, a new building was under construction to house a combined office, storage space and a nursing station.

Faithfulness In a COVID Summer: How United Methodist Camp/Retreat Ministries Navigated the Summer 2020 Season

04 Sep 2020 4:09 PM | Jen Burch (Administrator) Used by permission

Committed, adaptable, creative, faithful, hardworking, generous, compassionate. The staff and volunteers of United Methodist Camp/Retreat Ministries (UMCRM) demonstrate so many of the qualities that define effective leaders. This season, those attributes were tested in familiar ways and new ones that stretched even the most resilient among us.

Of the nearly 170 United Methodist Camp/Retreat Ministries in the United States that offer summer camps, the majority (about 90%) did not offer traditional summer camp for the 2020 season.[1] Directors, Executives, and boards of directors led painstaking decision-making processes which took into account guidance from the American Camp Association, CDC, and Association of Camp Nurses, local pandemic regulations and conditions, church and organizational values, priorities and finances, and site and staffing concerns, all filtered through prayer.

Distanced worship at Camp Allegheny, PA

Even while sacrificing the service, fun, engagement, and revenue that are part of summer camp, many camp/retreat site staff and volunteers were able to keep on in ministry, sharing God's good news of love and actively serving as hands and feet of Christ in new ways in their communities. Some offered virtual camp experiences online and through Camp-In-A-Box activities campers could experience from home.[2] Some welcomed small family retreats to the holy grounds of camp to provide respite, connection, and experiences of God's creation.[3] Some utilized commercial kitchens to cook for hungry neighbors.[4] A few sites created monastic residential communities with young adults exploring their faith and call.[5] Others repurposed camp/retreat buildings as quarantine housing[6] or distribution sites for food and supplies. Some were able to offer short-term day visits to help people find renewal through safely-distanced hiking, fishing, swimming, horse riding, or service projects. Many reached out to support families and children who needed to remember someone cares about them.

Director Whitney Winston and Rev. Tom Robins assemble camper boxes for Camp In The Community, TN

The few (about 12) UMCRM sites that were able to offer residential camp in the 2020 summer season did so with trepidation, thoughtfulness, and humility. In a recent UMCRM Community Conversation, several leaders from around the country shared trials, joys, and lessons learned from summer 2020. All of the UMCRM sites that operated this season took a rigorous, layered approach to COVID-19 safety protocols, including low-contact camper drop-off and pickup, increased cleaning and sanitizing of spaces and equipment, dividing campers and staff into discrete and non-mixing "cohort" small groups, daily health screening, decreased capacity and time in indoor spaces to allow for physical distancing, wearing masks, increased hand-washing, eliminating off-site activities, and adapting food service systems. This summer season demanded new inventions like creative hand-washing stations and adapted games that incorporated physical distancing. Staff created new practices, new forms, new communication and record-keeping strategies, new systems for managing the flow of people in our spaces. Counselors became experts in managing masks and hand sanitizer in addition to the usual sunscreen, appropriate footwear, and bug spray.

Masked campers and staff at Camp Allegheny, PA, July 2020

One unexpected blessing that Directors reported from this strange summer was a marked decrease (and even absence) of the usual illnesses and injuries. Maybe everyone was just that much more careful this year? Maybe all of that hand-washing really does make a big difference to our health?!

Hand-washing at Camp Don Lee, NC

Perhaps it should come as no surprise that camp, in its simplest form, still works. Even stripped of fancy off-site trips, guest speakers, specialty programs, and other bells and whistles, building community and having fun in a "sacred place apart"[7] are truly the core of the camp experience. For young people who spent much of the spring and early summer quarantined at home with limited social interaction, time at camp this season felt like an especially welcome joy and adventure. For those who spent way too many hours inside in front of screens, a week of fresh-air activity in a slice of God's beautiful Creation was especially sweet. When church and youth group activities had become virtual or nonexistent as a result of the pandemic, relevant Christian faith formation among a small group of peers was more needed than ever. For the thousands of campers who missed out on United Methodist summer camp in 2020, our ministry leaders missed you terribly, and they are hard at work to find ways to provide camp and retreat experiences for you just as soon as we can do that safely.

Leading summer camp in a "normal" season always involves late nights, early mornings, surprises, challenges, lots of preparation and stress. Those features were multiplied many-fold in this pandemic summer, and the relief and gratitude for a successful camp season cannot be overstated. When asked whether, if they could go back and decide again whether to hold summer camp, the majority of our Directors who ran camp said a resounding "yes." They said "yes," even knowing the financial strain of operating with limited capacity, "yes," fully aware of the extra work and rigor and sleepless nights that were part of leadership in a COVID summer. Camp staff and volunteers do what they do because they believe in the power of the camp experience to live out God's love for every child, to be places of safety, fun, learning, acceptance, challenge, and joy. Both those leaders who operated summer camps this season and those whose wisest choice was to remain closed, were guided by those commitments.

Tubing at Camp Don Lee at Rockfish, NC

Many donors who contribute to Camp/Retreat Ministries have witnessed the power of camp and are committed to making sure those experiences are still around for future generations of children, youth, and families. In places where camps remained closed in 2020, many families who could afford to donate a portion of their registration fees generously gave back to support their camp through the financial loss of the summer season. Donors have stepped up to help these vital ministries to weather this unprecedented year when camp and retreats are not able to offer our usual programming and host the groups that sustain our operations. We salute the wonderful supporters of United Methodist Camp & Retreat Ministries who give time, talent, treasure, and prayer to sustain these sacred places and their dedicated staff. If you have not had the opportunity to give to your favorite camp this season, please reach out to see what their current needs are and how you can help.

The UMCRM Association brings our nationwide community together to be a resource and advocate for those amazing staff and the generous volunteer deans, board members, and others who support their ministries. Together we are learning how to serve in the midst of a pandemic, mitigating risk and caring for God's people and sacred grounds to the best of our abilities. If you would like to join the Association or support our mission, find us at UMCRM.org.

1 Based on estimates by the UMCRM Association.

2 Camp in the Community, TN Doorstep deliveries: 1,400 kids experience church camp at home and Camp Alta Mons, VA Montgomery County camp finds way to send camp experience home are just two examples of UMCRM camps that used this model.

3 Camp Wanake, OH Wanake Camp & Retreat Center and Buckhorn Camp, CO Summer Family Camping were among the sites that provided experiences for small family groups.

4 Camp Magruder, OR is one example: https://www.facebook.com/104908182943341/videos/273571057177382/

5 Two examples are "YAISC" at Camp Wrightwood, CA Young Adult Intentional Spiritual Community (YAISC) and the intern program at Camp Dickenson (VA) Summer Interns 2020

6 See Alton L. Collins Center (OR) Eagle Creek facility gives COVID-19 patients space to quarantine

7 One of the "7 Foundations of Camp & Retreat Ministry": http://umcrm.camp/about-us/7-foundations/

References:

“Toward Excellence in Camping” – National office of the Methodist Church

Methodist History, January 2020

Conference Journals (all years available on www.alaskaumc.org)

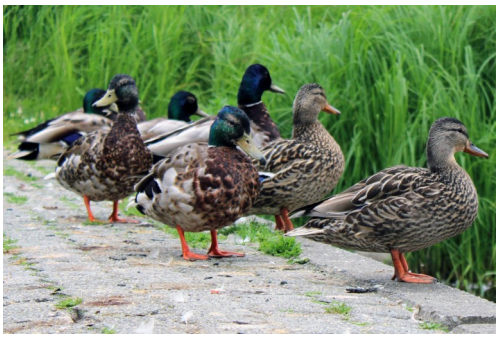
Google clip art/photos

Conference Archives

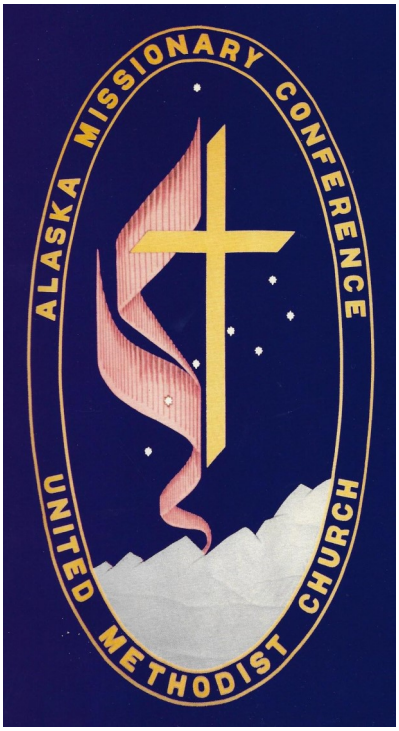
Various peoples contributions and the camp website

Photograph contributions courtesy of Bea Shepard, Pam Moore, Nico Buss, Jim LaBau, Juneau Empire, Larry Hayden, Jane Ginter, Birchwood Camp, Judy Maier, Don Gotschall, John J. Shaffer, Florence Johnson, and Jo Anne Hayden.

Jen Burch (M.Div.) is Association Administrator for UMCRM and edits weekly S'more Mail e-news. Jen is a former Director of several United Methodist Camp/Retreat Centers and youth-serving nonprofit organizations. She's staying physically-distanced but virtually connected from her home in Colorado.



Space for your personal notes:



Banner design by Rev. David Fison

SE United Methodist Camp
Juneau, Alaska