

Camp counselors make summer fun

By MARY CLIFFORD

Tar Heel Staff Writer

Every summer thousands of kids go to summer camps of every description. There are sports camps, religious camps, scout camps and camps that specialize in certain areas such as computer programming, weight loss and the arts. In most cases the kids are guaranteed a good time for the duration of their stay, but did you ever stop to think what it must be like for those dedicated individuals who have signed over their summer for low wages and long hours—the counselors?

The job of camp counselor is probably among the most difficult summer jobs ever created for our nation's young people. However, thousands of high school and college students all over the country apply for employment that some say is nothing more than a "glorified babysitting job."

While camp counseling isn't for everyone those who have an endless supply of patience, a genuine love for children, an ability and willingness to teach, and the desire to meet interesting people from all over the world, will find counseling is a wonderful experience. Many counselors have been campers themselves and becoming a member of the staff is a very natural progression: However, most counselors come to the camp not really knowing what to expect.

A counselor at one of the local day camps compared working with the kids to spending an unhappy evening with a blind date. "I never dreamed that kids could squirm and move around for such long periods of time. I'm having trouble keeping up with them!" Of course not every counselor has difficulty in maintaining order. One camper compared his counselor to "Mr. T." "You have to do what he says or he mangles you."

A day for a typical counselor begins with reveille at 8 a.m. and it ends with taps around 10 p.m. It is difficult to conceive how so much is packed into a 14 hour day. A Camp Thunderbird (located on Lake Wylie near Charlotte) six hours are spent in activity time and can include anything from horseback riding to waterskiing depending



Karen Lloyd helps Mathew read

Tar Heel/Lori Thomas

on the counselor's assignment. For counselors who stay in one activity all day the routine can get monotonous, but nevertheless (at least at T-Bird) the kids get equally paced attention.

The benefits for being a camp counselor are as good as any job found in the summer. A counselor has the opportunity to work with interesting people from all over the world, to learn from as well as teach very special young people, and with them they take memories that last a life time.

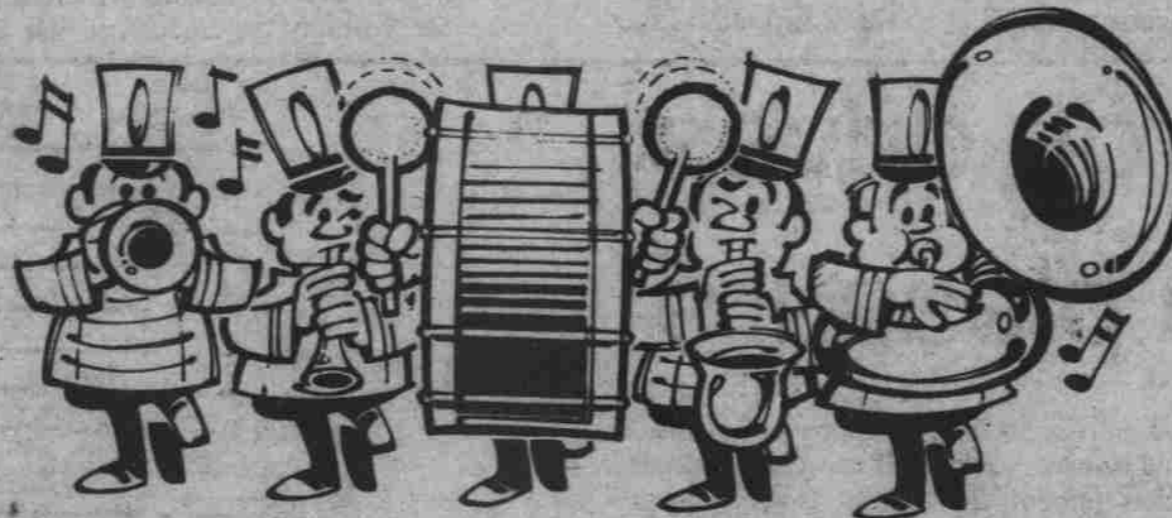
It is not a well-kept secret that summer romances flourish at camps. This may be the most popular reason people choose to work in this environment. Often situated in very romantic settings, summer camps have been the starting points for many long lasting relationships. One camp director who is also a Methodist minister has married 17 couples whose courtships began at his camp.

"I love kids, but I have to admit I come here for myself too—I think of this as a camp for us older kids, too," added a nineteen year-old sailing instructor.

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