

Counselors needed to care for happy campers

By **CORIN ORTLAM**
Staff Writer

If you like working with children and enjoy the camp scene, then North Carolina camps are looking for you to work as a summer camp counselor.

"Children's camps are special worlds, providing unusual opportunities for research and education across a wide spectrum of disciplines," says the American Camping Association description. Many UNC students have taken the camp opportunity as a way to spend a productive summer.

North Carolina has a variety of camps to choose from. Some are religiously affiliated, such as the Methodist Hinton Rural Life Center, Camp Rockmont and Falling Creek Camp for Christian boys, the Willow Run Lakeside Christian Ski School on Lake Gaston, and Blue Star, a private Jewish camp in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Others are Girl Scout camps, YMCA-sponsored, or specialized camps such as Sea Gull and Seafarer.

Camp New Hope in Chapel Hill is a host to several different types of camps. In addition to UNC's Residence Hall camp and Campus Y Freshmen camps that are held there, New Hope hosts a muscular dystrophy camp, the North Carolina

Society for Autistic Children and Adults camp, and a French and English exchange camp with 24 French and 24 English students.

Presbyterian Point, located on Carr Lake, is another popular local camp. Students can come to the camp for a day, rent equipment, or get a beach pass.

"We enjoy being so close to the University," says Reverend Paul Ransford, camp director for New Hope and Presbyterian Point. Several UNC students work at the camps, and many groups such as the nursing school, business school, and other University departments also work there.

Most summer camps offer benefits not found in other jobs. The room and board are provided for counselors in most cases, and there are opportunities for students to receive college credit. Of course, one of the main assets of working at a camp for the summer is the chance to work with children.

Lara Collins will be working for her second year at Camp Oconeechee on Lake Lure. "I used to go as a camper when I was younger and I always wanted to be on the staff," she says. Collins is in charge of third, seventh, eighth, and ninth grade girls. "I love being outdoors. We go

white-water rafting, rappelling, canoeing, and swimming. We also do arts and crafts, play sports, and sing," says Collins. This summer, she will work as an assistant unit leader, a lifeguard, and as a rappelling instructor.

"I went to camp in the third grade and hated it, but somehow I ended up a counselor and I love it," says Laura Morrison. This summer, Morrison is returning for a second year to Camp Don Lee in Arapahoe.

Camp Don Lee hosts children in grades 1-11 for half-week to four-week sessions, and includes children with special problems. Camp Rainbow is for children or siblings of children with cancer. These children are incorporated into all of the regular camp programs for one week. Another program hosts problem children who might otherwise not be able to go to a camp.

Morrison recounted crazy antics the staff members played on each other to "break the monotony." She

says, "It became a standing joke that if you left the camp, you brought something back. One morning we woke up and found pink flamingos and ceramic animals all over the yard. Another girl found a canoe in her bed. The counselors were always playing practical jokes on each other."

Brandon Uttley and Steve Armstrong are long-time campers at Camp Cheerio. "Last year was the first summer in 12 years that I wasn't at Camp Cheerio," says Armstrong.

Uttley was a camper for seven years, and a counselor in training, a junior counselor, and senior counselor other summers. "I enjoyed going as a kid so much that I wanted to get back into the camp environment," says Uttley.

This year Armstrong will work as Aquatics director at Cheerio. "Usually counselors don't specialize. You're not stuck in one area. By teaching a variety of activities, you don't get bored," says Armstrong. "It

doesn't matter if you don't know how to do something. If you have the interest, you can work as an assistant first."

Patience is almost a pre-requisite for a good camp counselor. "(The children) are trying at times. I'm always surprised at how much they know," says Armstrong.

Sarah Davis, a UNC student who has also been a camper, counselor and program director, says, "Your love of children has to come before your own needs or desires. The kids can tell right away if something isn't right."

Davis, who organized Camp Day on Feb. 9 with 45 camps in 8 states represented, says, "Everybody ought to be a counselor once in their lives. It is so rewarding being a positive influence on a child's life."



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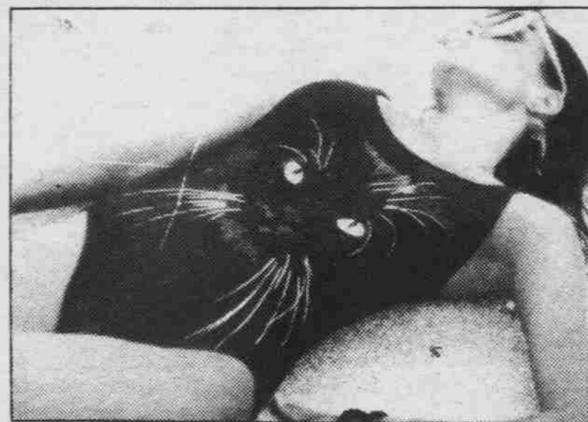
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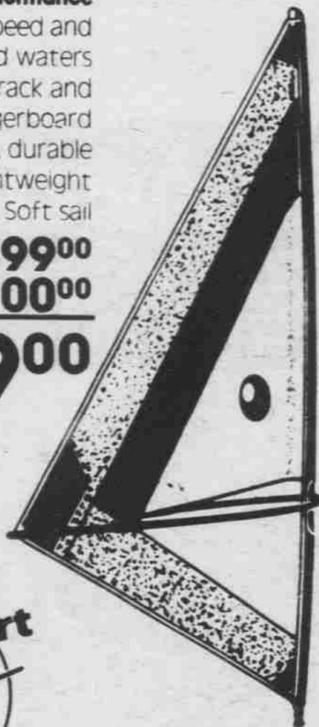
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