



# Around the Campfire

## NATWC Newsletter

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by: Steve Cockerham

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## The New NATWC

What's new at NATWC is not really new, just different and well...not all that different, either. The change is like the ones in nature, like mountains, seas, and deserts. Though the seasons might alter the appearance, the essential features are there. Weather, like clothes, may change daily, but you can usually tell what's under the snow or skirt although the details do escape. The change in NATWC is the cycling of leadership, a steady renewal of people helping to lead the way in wilderness and adventure therapy. Members of the Board of Directors take turns in the governing body of NATWC and some on the Executive Committee as Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Linda Tatsapaugh has served elegantly and effectively as Chair of NATWC during her

tenure. She is now passing the torch to the Vice Chair, Steve Cockerham.

Linda has had a lengthy career in Wilderness and Adventure Programming. As director of the Talisman Programs in Asheville, NC, she has led a competent group of professionals in providing a superb level of care for young people and their families, who had been struggling with learning issues in their development. Linda has accomplished much during her participation with NATWC. Besides her constant help over the years during our annual conference, she was instrumental in creating the Wilderness Counselor Certification Program. As chair of that group, policy and procedure for credentialing counsel-

ors was put into place, insuring strong standards for competency for professionals using the wilds for counseling.

Linda Tatsapaugh was one of the key energizing forces to professionalize the administration of NATWC, supervising our staff and overseeing operations. Also having served as Secretary of NATWC, her understanding of running the association has been invaluable during all the years of her leadership. As Chair, she coordinated the expansion of committee management in NATWC, streamlining board processes and increasing our productivity. We are now poised to ignite a new era of

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## Soltreks: A Woman's Journey

*When I first learned of the opportunity to do a Soltreks Women's Trek, I saw it as the answer to my prayers. I was feeling increasingly overwhelmed by the stressful situations in my life, at home, and at work. My life felt chaotic; I was sad, angry, disconnected, moving from reaction to reaction like being tossed about on the waves, becoming fearful that I would just sink under. I felt sure that Lorri's wise approach to working on emotional challenges would help me sort out the various parts*



*of what was going on, and help me see clearly what I might be needing to do and what I might need from others in my life.*

*At first on the trek, I was content just to focus on the physical experience of hiking and camping. I was hesitant to go too deeply into my feelings because it seemed like such a tangled mess in there. The first thing that helped was looking at my*

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Taken by: Philip Rogers  
Prentice Cooper State  
Park

**“We’ve  
managed to  
show the world  
that this way  
can work, that  
this trail leads  
to the end you  
wanted to  
reach.”**



Taken by: Philip Rogers  
Prentice Cooper State Park

## The New NATWC (continued)

nonprofit leadership in the industry of wilderness and adventure programming. The newsletter of NATWC that you are now receiving emerged from her encouragement. This and so much more have characterized the accomplishments of this individual and we owe her a tremendous vote of appreciation.

Let me introduce myself to you as the new Chair of NATWC. As a member of NATWC since 2000, I’ve watched the association grow into a unique group of advocates for wilderness and adventure therapy. When I joined NATWC, I was enthralled by the stories of those who remembered the beginning. Tracing our origin to a group of interested professionals sitting around an AEE conference in the early 90s, people such as George Young, Archie Buie, Chris Burns, Larry Olson, and Mike Angstadt got together and formed a nonprofit association devoted specially to outdoor therapeutic programming.

Aided later by Rick McClintock, Shep Young, Reggie Jackson, Ross Whitney, and Mark Hobbins, NATWC stepped up its impact on the profession. Linda came from that generation to lead a new wave of Board members with folks like Angie Senic, Sandy Schmiedeknecht, Jason Brode, Holly Hunter, and Micah Wheat. Others have certainly made their contribution and new board members will be installed during the next few months. For NATWC, like most nonprofits, leadership evolves as new members choose to take administrative roles. It is nothing less than a particularly significant honor for me to accept the role of Chair for this professional group.

Actually, the New NATWC has already begun. That is the real message of change in this notice. I will be continuing the progress of others. I remember the first time ever hearing about wilderness programs, back in the 70s with this novel outdoor approach implemented at a program near the university I was attending. My professor told about youth in residential treatment living like Boy Scout troops, only therapeutic. He spoke about the benefits of challenge, the personal growth that can be enhanced by dealing with the difficulties of living in the wilderness and encountering the adventures of backpacking, mountain climbing, and white-water rafting.

One requirement of the wilderness program my teacher visited was to do something impossible. Each group of youth was to take weeks, if necessary, to decide what task they could accomplish that most people would reasonably consider impossible. One group chose to move this huge boulder, a truck sized rock that most people would climb upon or use dynamite to reposition. They didn’t have to take it somewhere else, only to make it move. So they dug all around the boulder, slowly taking away all the dirt (and mud), constantly supporting the boulder along the way, until finally there was at least a small space on every part of the undersurface. At that point, attaching ropes to the appropriate supports, they pulled outward and caused the boulder to adjust position with a satisfying “chunk”.

Later on, I wrote a masters thesis on wilderness programs and so much enjoyed the experience that I volunteered

at one. Then, a job offer came as a family liaison counselor at another program and I was hooked. I later became a director and continued with wilderness and adventure therapy, in this and other programs. Eventually becoming a faculty member of East Tennessee State University, I’ve continued to devote my service and study with wilderness programming as a member of the Board of NATWC. Not only is wilderness and adventure therapy a vital interest of mine, but it’s also part of my job. That incentive motivates all the members of NATWC and inspires us to complete the tasks set upon us in outdoor behavioral health-care.

I’ve watched the field of wilderness programming go through the paces – plan for the trip, pack up the provisions, embark on the adventure, handle all the problems, somehow, and then make it back, processing all the way. We’ve managed to show the world that this way can work, that this trail leads to the end you wanted to reach. We’ve done the research, both in the efficacy trials and the testimonials of those who’ve made the trek. We’ve weathered the travails, those in the industry who went too far and those who simply had the adversity of working with the most challenged of young people. At this point, we’ve established ourselves as a viable choice in the continuum of care. Wilderness and adventure therapy has become a true path, like the Appalachian or Pacific Crest trails, a well-trodden way to explore and learn how to survive and thrive in our cognitive, behavioral, and emotional lives.

*Steve Cockerham  
Editor and NATWC Chair*

## Soltreks: A Woman's Journey (continued)

negative self-talk and realizing how much there is and how actively it has been aroused in my present circumstances. But what awoke my emotions most was, after all, doing the artwork. First was the Mandala; showing how much of a barrier I felt between myself and others and between my outward self and my inner feelings. It was a good start just to say how much I didn't want to go there.

Then came the climb to the sacred place at the top of the ridge. A wonderful lesson in finding the way a few steps at a time, seeing how it goes as it unfolds instead of anticipating some catastrophic outcome and becoming too fearful to move. I think that experience will resonate with me for a long time to come; capped by the memory of emerging into that airy, sunny, holy place at the crest, guarded all around by the stunning rock formations. I felt truly blessed and rewarded for my efforts by just being able to

exist in that space for a few moments.

Then the artwork brought me to a doorway that gave into my hidden feelings of frustration, loss, being overwhelmed and feeling pulled in so many directions at once, and emptied out, more and more brittle, with less and less to give to any part of my life. With more work, talking and processing, listening to others and receiving their support, I began to create a vision of how I might work to shape my life into something more whole, more healthy, and most importantly, more sustaining and sustainable.

I felt both strengthened and humbled by this experience. I am hopeful of forming a stronger and more loving relationship with my husband, a closer relationship with my older daughter, and of forming clearer and firmer boundaries in my relationship with my younger daughter. I am hopeful of reawakening the impulse to

create images in artwork and to carve out a place in my life where that impulse can flower into a beautiful garden.

I look forward to returning to my family and to my friends who have helped sustain me through these past many years, and who somehow, miraculously, feel the same way about me. That is how it should be.

I'm so grateful to the Soltreks staff and the other woman on this women's trek for being there with me, making this experience so rich and full of wonder.

This letter was written by a **Soltreks Women's Trek** participant. Permission to publish was granted by Lorri Hanna, Executive Director of Soltreks, Two Harbors, MN. [www.soltreks.com](http://www.soltreks.com) Phone: 218-834-4607



Taken by: Philip Rogers  
from Prentice Cooper  
State Park

**"I began to  
create a vision of  
how I might work  
to shape my life  
into something  
more whole,  
more healthy..."**

## In Focus: Academy Programs

Academy Programs began serving at-risk children and families in West Virginia in 2002. The Academy serves its community and state by providing residential and in-home services for children with behavioral disorders. The YORE Academy is a residential substance abuse program that can

serve 24 children at capacity. The Youth Academy is a Level II residential program that has a capacity of 22. The Youth Academy also offers Community Family Intensive Treatment (CFIT) an in-home program that serves children at risk of out of home placement and those returning home from place-

ment. All Academy services and programs feature an accountable, family centered, community-based approach.

### Mission

The Academy provides accountable, effective, family-centered, community-based treatment services which are de-



Taken from: Academy  
Programs Website

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Taken by: Philip Rogers at  
Prentice Cooper State Park

## 2010 Board of Directors Contact Information

**Steve Cockerham- Chair** 2000  
**Research Chair**  
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**“Change in  
 inevitable --  
 except from a  
 vending machine.  
 (Robert C.  
 Gallagher)”**

**Sandy Schmiedeknecht- Secretary** 2009  
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**Micah Wheat- Treasurer** 2009  
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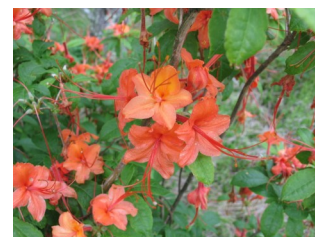


Taken by: Philip Rogers

## 2010 Board of Directors Contact Information (continued)

**Jason Brode –Membership Chair** 2007  
**Committee Member: Communication, Conference**

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Taken by: Eric Kampmann

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*“The road of life  
 twists and turns  
 and no two  
 directions are  
 ever the same.  
 Yet our lessons  
 come from the  
 journey not the  
 destination. (Don  
 Williams Jr.)”*

## In Focus: Academy Programs (continued)

livered in the least restrictive and most efficient manner

### Values

- Commitment to

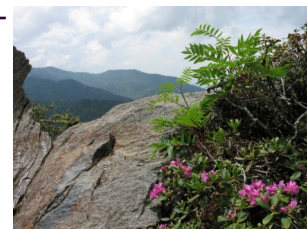
Service...by acknowledging that the easy way is not always the best way and challenging oneself to find positive solutions.

- Education...as the

cornerstone to constructive change.

- Outcomes... that are evidenced-based.

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Taken by: Eric Kampmann

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Visit us at [NATWC.org](http://NATWC.org)



## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The primary purpose of NATWC is to support the establishment and continuation of therapeutic wilderness camping organizations; with the attendant responsibility to educate the public as to the existence of such organizations and their success in helping troubled young people change their lives for the better.

**National Association of Therapeutic Wilderness Camping  
NATWC  
PO Box 593  
437 William Avenue, Suite 5  
Davis, WV 26260**

## In Focus: Academy Programs (continued)

• The Individual...  
Every child matters

• Community...by developing a sense of belonging accomplished by valuing each community member as an investor in the mission of the Youth Academy and the client as a member of the community.

• Respect... that is earned by staff and client.

• Communication... as essential in delivering efficient and effective services.

• Re-Education... as the foundation on which programming is delivered.

• Family...as being a vital and inherent component of a child's success.

• Safety and Well-Being...as the first component to treatment.

• Trust... as sacred and essential.

Innovation...in pro-

gramming to create a challenging environment that guides a child and family to reach their potential.

### Goals

• To develop, maintain and nurture programming reflective of evolving client, family and community needs.

• To seize and exploit every opportunity as a learning moment.

• To provide evidenced-based practices that are rooted in the achievement of expected outcomes.

• Ensure that all programming is individualized and addresses each child's needs.

• To engage stakeholders through acts of altruism and partnership so as to contribute socially and economically to the betterment of our community.

• To provide an environment where client and staff opinions and feelings are respected.

• To communicate with stakeholders on a free, open and continual basis.

• To maintain a solid focus that the principles of Re-Education are the driving force of the Youth Academy.

• To engage each client's family as a valuable and critical component of the treatment process.

• To provide a safe and secure environment where clients and staff thrive.

• To manifest an environment to actualize the essence of trust in the relationship building process.

To commit to the constant pursuit of innovative, efficient and state-of-the-art approaches that promulgate success

For more information visit our website at:

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