

It all started in the fall of 1969. Jim Molyneaux thought a weekend trip to a local farm would be a valuable experience for his 6th grade science classes. He had arranged with the Bink family to use their farm as the destination for a weekend overnight trip. The staff included Orv Clark, Bill Chadwick, school hygienist Miss Welda Bell and Pete Molyneaux, Jim's brother. Orv and Bill did the cooking. Miss Bell chaperoned, while Pete and Jim handled the curriculum. Girls slept in a one-room cabin (shack) with a loft covered in Gulf Oil signs. (Local pilots were said to have used the spot as a reference when flying in the area.) The boys slept in the barn loft. A farm pond provided most of the entertainment/environmental activities. Anyone remember the zip line? The trip ended the next day with a visit to the Molyneaux farm (a sort of before its time petting zoo) and directly on the return path to Portville.

That winter Jim Piatt (me) joined the staff at PCS as an opening came about in the 6th grade. I took over the science duties and Mr. Molyneaux moved to the English department. The Jims quickly decided that the farm trip should stay and so continued in the spring of 1970. The only changes to the program were in staffing. Mr. Piatt's wife, Rosa, and some other family, helped with the chaperone duties. Joyce Steiner, Donna and Jon Ford were also roped into the camping family. It was at this first weekend experience that the campfire story, "The Golden Arm" was told by Pete Molyneaux. Pete was to continue that tradition for over 30 years!

The success of that weekend trip in the fall and spring of '69/'70 spawned the week long residential outdoor experience now known as the Sixth Grade Ecology Trip. Little did we know!

The success of this program can be attributed not to a few but only a community of people willing to give and share. Teaching staff, administration, students, parent volunteers, and community businesses are still the key to keeping this program viable. In the remainder of this narrative, I would like to credit a number of those folks while at the same time remembering a history, one you may have been a part of.

Mr. John Dubots was the supporting administrative drive, always encouraging and making sure we had the resources to be successful.

I can still see John in the bus garage on a given Saturday with his car wash crew trying to soak him down as much as the cars. Who among us could ever pass up the chance of dousing the principal in that situation? I am sure he fought more battles and did more behind the scenes work than we will ever know.

The support continues today with the guidance of Superintendent, Tom Simon. Tom has become very involved in the camp program and its finances. We are very thankful for all he has done during his short tenure. He recently (6/14/16) even shared his cooking skills spending a day in the kitchen and doing quite well! Kudos to elementary principal, Lynn Corder, who has picked up the challenge of seeing the program remains viable while adding his expertise in the bluebird house construction area!

The original teaching staff of Marv Smith, Helen Frost and the Jims may have been the first but certainly not the last. Most staff realized that if you moved into the 6th grade you would probably be expected to attend camp and participate. No one, not one teacher ever refused to be a part of this trip. What a tribute to those staff members. Marv Smith served the longest, and while the great outdoors might not have been his first choice, Marv was there. Many will remember his hours at the archery range and grueling hikes to the fish hatchery. Mrs. Frost retired soon after this first trip but her "farm girl" background fit her well at camp. The "Lindas" were the next most senior (time, not age) staffers, Scott and Barber. Mrs. Scott had a swimming aptitude and served as a lifeguard on many occasions, while Mrs. Barber was into the plant/artsy thing. Both did lots of extra duty in the dining hall trying to head up the KP crews for many years.

There are so many more names to remember, and I will try to get most. Hopefully you have a camp memory or two that includes one of these teachers. Early on there was Joel Fowler, Ann Caste, Cindy (Donnelly) McCann, Pat (McPhearson) Dentler, Sandy McFarland, Mike DeBarbieri, and Al Murawski. Amy(Kuzak) Enos, Dave Waugh, Larry Welty, Miki Cole, Laurie Warner, Norm Glover and Cheryl (Dean) Kloc, and Deb Pinney have joined the camp crew in later years and were (are) a big part of our Timbercrest days. Elementary principal, Lynn Corder and secretary, Libby Stanton, are two new contributors to the teaching staff. I must also mention Anne Mitchell in this group as boon-dogglor extraordinaire! (Her husband Dan has been there too.) 2017 brought some bad health news to Dave Waugh. And while recovering, former camper and senior counselor, Josh Haynes, picked up a huge amount of the slack. Gene Rogers, former camper, long time instructor/presenter has been a big help in seeing that this document is on the school web site and usually spends a day at camp in some teaching capacity. Dave Waugh and Amy Enos have pretty much taken over the “Jims’ duties” and are a big reason for the continued success of the camp. Mrs. Cole is catching up in the seniority department, too. She recently (2016) took over the responsibility of camp director and proved her worth in that capacity. Dave and Amy made every effort to insure her success by handling many of the tasks they have done in the past. It is especially gratifying to remember that Amy, Larry, and Norm were each former campers and are now a part of the program history themselves. 2018 arrived with a new face in the 6th grade staff, Mrs. Aubree Malick. Aubree proved herself to be a great addition to a long list of dedicated teachers and we look forward to seeing her more in the future!

Wolf Creek Scout Camp was the first in June of 1971. We did get the second year in, but the flood and rains of 1972 washed out the lake and Wolf Creek was never the same again. We did return in ‘73 but soon realized that bussing to the school for swimming and using a small pond for canoes just wasn’t going to work. What did work was the kitchen. And what a kitchen we had! Many may not realize that our first meals came from the Spring Hill Dairy. Marion Newberg agreed to prepare our meals at the restaurant and a couple of Chevy wagons from the school delivered.

We relied on parents greatly at meal times, and two stayed with us more than any since. Jerry Gaylor and Jack Garrey began as volunteers and soon became critical to the success of the Ecology Program. Without the people who have given up so much of their personal time, often using vacation credits to be with us, the camp could not have been. Food is of the utmost importance in keeping campers happy, and we certainly have been happy with our food and the hands that prepared it. Jack and Jerry served the community for over 20 years, and we were really concerned about finding replacements when the day finally came.

Not to worry as the Kamery’s stepped right in and didn’t miss a beat. They had worked with Jack and Jerry as volunteers and agreed to give it a whirl. Sue and Dale saw us through their three children, if not more, and once again, we were in the market for cooks. Dennis Hollamby and his wife, Maria, came aboard. Dennis had been a 6th grade camper himself, and now he was giving back to the program in a very special way. The Hollamby’s had a couple of boys who were soon to be campers themselves. How neat for those teachers to see the generations coming through. The kitchen takes its toll, and soon we were recruiting again.

Two more former campers and now a married couple stepped up to the plate, or pots and pans, as the case may be. Lisa and Scott Nix became our next kitchen staffers. Throughout the years, the quality of the food has never wavered. Lisa and Scott brought an extended family with parents and sibs often showing up in the kitchen to pitch in, especially pizza pig-out nights.

Brother in law, Tom Olson, became a lifesaving source of campfire wood ever since! We have been very fortunate to have numerous families provide wood over the years. I am so sorry not to have kept better track. I must acknowledge one other family at this point, the Giberson’s,

Rick and Nanette. They have been transporting all our food and supplies to camp for a number of years now in a beautiful enclosed trailer. They leave the trailer at camp for the week, which then serves as a great storage area for the cook staff.

Now, back to the kitchen. Lisa was working on a teaching degree at this time, and once graduated, stepped into a job at a local school and out of our kitchen. Thank goodness for the Zinks! Children, Justine and Luke, were just coming along and their parents saw a need for new help in the kitchen. Peg and Pat are now doing the duty, and what a great job they do!

2016 saw the arrival of yet another new face in the kitchen. We were so fortunate to have Ms. Laura Watson, PCS cafeteria manager, willing to take on the monumental task of chief cook and bottle washer. What an asset she is! Food quality and quantity remains high with meals on time and delicious. How blessed we have been over almost 50 years to have the staff we've had. Jack and Jerry are no longer with us, but I know they would be pleased to see there are others willing to take on the monumental responsibilities of the PCS Camp Kitchen! A note to all those parents who have made themselves available for assisting in the kitchen, we sincerely thank you all. A special thanks goes out to Kip Morrow who has been in the kitchen every Thursday for years and washed more pots and pans than any other kitchen staffer. I just realized Thursday is pizza pig out and Kip has not missed one yet???

In 1976, we left Wolf Creek for the conservation camp at Rushford Lake. The camp is owned and operated by the NYSDEC. This camp did give us a home for a couple of years, but was small and did not have sleeping accommodations for everyone. The boys slept in tents from home, and the girls were in a dormitory setting. Linda Barber's husband, Mike, was a big help in seeing we had potable water for the boys site which was actually in a field to the side and rear of the lodge. It was a beautiful location but just would not hold us. In 1978, we moved to Elk Lick, a Boy Scout camp just outside of Smethport.

We were now back in tents and pit toilets! We were also establishing a number of programs that were to become traditions at camp. One of the most popular was the "snake man". This actually began at Wolf Creek with St Bona's Dr. Bothner as the presenter. He retired from camp and suggested a grad student, Herb Tucker, as replacement. Herb was with us for many years, and Portville campers got to watch his family grow up with the program and become presenters themselves. We still do the snakes, but now have a snake woman, Amanda Griggs, of Scio, NY. She is also breaking her family in, and both daughter and son are becoming more of the program every year.

Fred Evans, local turkey expert, brought another long running program. How fortunate to have such a respected DEC rep as part of our curriculum. Even after retirement, Fred made more visits to camp and has filled in when others could not be with us. The list is too long to visit each program, but perhaps you remember: Bruce Robinson - forestry, Dan Dourghty - black bear, Dan Rasey and Jeff Bray (campers) - fishing, Portville's, Rollie Bray - turkey, Jerry and Addie Scutt (camper) -lumberjacking, Steve Phillips - dog obedience, Midge Stock- Seneca Indian dancer, Rangers Rogers and Flannigan- hiking and fire safety, Mike and Brandon Scott with Kaleb Cutting - hunting and videos, Chad Faulkner (camper) - taxidermy/videographer, Chuck Lucas - custom fishing poles, Mark Baker and granddaughter, Hannah - local raptor rehabilitator, Bev Jones of the Pfeiffer Nature Center, and I am sure I have not listed them all.

Elk Lick had it all: big lake, nice sites, pool, huge lodge and great campfire area. Unfortunately, the cost of camp became greater than we could pay, and we moved again. The year was 1981 and we settled in at Crystal Lake. (Yes, some parts of the movie were shot at this locale!) We spent 5 years at this spot where we continued another camp tradition: Monday night chicken BBQ! It was thought that some of our regular evening speakers came only for the chicken but...? How about those chicken chefs: Jack and Jerry (of course), Mike Barber and son

Josh, Kevin Curran, Cliff Hogan, George Nuffer, and Mike DeBarberi are the ones who come to mind. It is difficult to drive by this camp on Rt. 98, just outside of Arcade, and not flash back to so many memories of those times. Once again money and budget forced us to consider a new camp, and we finally found a home. Camp Timbercrest in the Randolph area has been our spot since 1986.

Yes, we have been at Timbercrest for over 25 years now. We did have one hiatus in 2007 when the camp went through a major revamp and occupancy certificates were late in coming, so....the YMCA was kind enough to let us use Camp Onyasha on Chautauqua Lake with very short notice. It is a gorgeous camp with a beautiful log lodge overlooking the lake. Timbercrest was home, and the next year we returned to continue our program. Many of the activities of Wolf Creek are still being done today. Mr. Molyneaux's canoes are supervised by Dave Waugh with a few kayaks thrown in the mix. Mr. Smith's archery area is now equipped with compound bows and 3-D targets. Mr. Piatt's compass class is still a tradition, but augmented with GPS units and still taught by Mr. Piatt. Amy Enos still sees that a letter gets home from camp. and yes, The Pit and the Pendulum is still the Wednesday night movie! The Ecology Book still has many of the original pages with some deletions and additions. Most would recognize it as similar to their own.

We continue to rely on additional support staff from a variety of sources. You may recognize some of these volunteers: Vicki Greene Schmitt, Gary Swetland, Gene Rogers, Steve Hadzicki, Dave Shelc, Jim and Bernice Pierson, Boyd Fitzsimmons, Tim Panos, Dan Carrier, Pam Dominski, Alex Cole, Catt County Alcohol and Substance Abuse group, Josh Haynes, Mike and Chrissie Matz, Charlie Backus, Sierra Beaver, Jean Bantelman and more to come...

We continue to compete in the kickball tourney, and campfires burn most nights with Amy Enos at the front in Mr. Molyneaux's place. "Junior Birdmen" and "Amster, Amster, dam, dam, dam," "Sam, the Lavatory Man," "Wishy Washy Washerwoman" are still favorites, old and new! I have been fortunate to move into the job description of storyteller - spinner of tall tales which are mostly true including Pete Molyneaux's "Golden Arm." Do you remember "Albie Closser," "The Water Ghost of Duesenbury Mansion" or "Boss Hog and the Zippo lighter?" We still do a pizza pig-out on Thursday night and Camp Olympics on Friday before we leave.

How fortunate we have been to think of the hundreds of kids who have safely spent a week at camp and returned with most of their body parts intact. The safe returns are not an accident and much prep goes into health and safety. Our waterfronts are always supervised by certified guards and directors. Thank you so much Jim Molyneaux, Mary Kay Gethicker (Erhardt), Linda Scott, Chris Hadzicki, Dave Waugh, Beth Colligan, Chuck Hild, and most recently, Libby Stanton for making sure we always had water activities. The first aid/meds responsibility have become full time and have been for quite awhile. Kudos and recognition to so many of you who gave of your time and expertise: Mary McCoy, Jean Feely, Sally Kayes, Lurna Kellog, Rick Scheiterly and Dr Becky Scheiterly, Penny Milne, Wendy Eaton, John Eaton (camper, senior counselor and nurse) and Angela (Martin) Emley (almost a full-time staffer now, ten years and counting). Your TLC over the years has touched us all.

You can see the success of this adventure is truly a community effort. It does take a village to do whatever... I would also like to acknowledge a few of the corporate operations in the area that have been such a part of our success: Olean Wholesale, Mahar Service Stores, Bernie Baldwin's River Valley Farms, Reid's Food Barn, Wendy's and the local McDonalds, and Slocum Archery. I should also mention our school cafeteria and transportation department for all the contributions they have made with their expertise and willingness to help. No lost luggage either, at least not on their part!

Much like dessert at camp, I have saved the best for last. My task is not yet complete and I will continue to make an effort to see that all of the senior counselors are listed in this history. Without the willingness of such great young adults we could never have attempted such an undertaking. They are certainly part of the village and a big part of this history.

1971

John Sutter
Liz Whitney
Dave Nichols
Nancy Martin??
Bob Doxey??

1972

Chris Anderson
Mary Kay Worth
Elaine Handley
Bill Nothem
Paul Dorman
Joe Hill

1973

John DeAngelis
Jeane Christopher
Jackie Frost
Dave Skiver
Cathy Firkel
John Cassada

1974

Tom Barnes
Denise Aaron
Linda Mieres
Rick Crocker
Keith McDivitt
Mel Quist

1975

Nanette Propster
Cindy Baker
Lori Sprague
Curt Metzgar
Barry Sullivan
Tom Warner

1976

Willie Prozeller
Jeff Nix
Todd Chadwick
Kathy Martin
Lisa Shepherd
Amy Lorenz

1977

Lisa Beck
Liz Wormer
Lance Baker ?

1978

Howie Jaekle
Dave Erickson
Randy Hunt
LuAnn Warner
Cari DeAngelo
Mary Cahilly

1979

Mark Jaekle
Jon Giberson
Kathy Rasey
Randy Bretzin
Kim Coast ?
Karen Klimizyk ?

1980

Tina Finger
Patty Eaton
Mo Rasey
Todd Reynolds
Larry Broughton
Rob Pocolany

1981

John Dubots
Kim Erickson
Don McClarin
Fran Shepherd
John Erhard
Patty Cahilly

1982

Jean Rasey
Melissa Gundlah
Amy Erickson
Jim White
Peter Hatch
Gary Griffith

1983

Tim Emley
Joe Dunn
John Eaton
Meghan Milne
Brenda Wright
Teri Dubots

1984

Angie White
Kelli Obrien
Coralie Warner
Jim Warner
Jerry Reynolds
Chris Gundlah

1985

Mike Buchannan
Joe Miller
Bill Haines
Kelly Milne
Kelly Woodard
Kristen Erickson

1986
Rick Kennedy
Al Witcher
Craig Myers
Anne Baldwin
Eva White
Sondra Peace

1987
Andy Kayes
Eric Anderson
Dave Kinnard
Nancy Hinkle
Shari Ralston
Kim Fairbanks

1988
Dan Bailey
Bob Miller
Steve Clark
Julie Jacobik
Jennifer Kayes
Laurie Hutchins

1989
Terry Scalfaro
Laura Welty
Laurie Kloc
Aaron Decker
Rick Hernandez
Linda Lucas

1990
Colleen Cannon
Monica Adams
Melissa Scutt
Kelly Marsh
Tyrone Nichols
Mike Torrey

1991
Kim Alferink
Amy Woodard
Misty Skinner
Cammie Morris
Andy Molyneaux
Chris Kloc
Travis Piscitelli
Jerry Button

1992
Michelle Messler
Jenn Haught
Staci Everetts
Erica Reynolds
Dave Fowler
Rich Wandover
Mike Lisek
Tom Chisholm

1993
Dawn Pierce
Amy Abdo
Tracy Stives
Brian Miller
Sean King
Lenny Giamano
Jeff Gephart

1994
Larry Johnson
Robbie Jones
Brock Greene
Kirsten Witherell
Jennifer Kunselman
Meg Diviney
Tara LaFredo

1995
Jeff Scott
Ryan Jordan
Devon Callahan
Kirk Heim
Shanell Kamery
Kara Wenke
Liz O'Conner
Denah Neudeck

1996
Joy Feeley
April Blaske
Summer Hill
Ryan Hunt
Dan Ermer
Kevin Spigel
Dominic Alcocer

1997
Kristi Forrest
Meredith Yates
Heidi Sturdevant
Joleigh Morehouse
Andy Kaya
Pat Moses
Shane Studley
Dan Weber

1998
Joe DeBarberi
Will Kamery
Vince King
Adam Babcock
Abbey Hadzicki
Becky Smith
Rhonda Moore
Stephanie Sprague

1999
Toby Miller
Chris Williams
Eric Blask
Chris McCoy
Nicole Dionne
Melissa Bzdak
Ellen Hanley
Carrie Niver

2000
Casey King
Phil Taylor
Chris Scott
Ty Warner
Sarah McCoy
Logan Hadzicki
Erica Smith
Vicki Schultz

2001

Andy Studley
Jason Gildner
Tom Chew
Brian Blask
Shanna Miller
Lerin Hill
Amy DeBarberi
Molly Snow

2002

Michelle Mallory
Alisha Wetherby
Liz Glover
Laura Sprague
Kurt Mott
Phil Dione
Andy Struchen
Josh Smith

2003

James Bush
Aimee Delyser
Eric Firkel
Adam Hellwig
Amber Haberberger
Jeremy Payne
Katie Swanson

2004

Mary Ann Bantleman
Alicia Austin
Erin Engals
Jared Kausner
Adam Wysocki
Casey Harris
Carli Woodhead
Scott Forrest ??

2005

Kiley Hadzicki
Jessica Campbell
Josh Haynes
Brad Holcomb
Angie Hollamby
Brian Nitsche
Hannah Donahue
??

2006

Ali Tigh
Ashley Bantleman
Matt Blue
Abe John
Justine Carr
Jesse Spehar
Joe Holcomb
Megan Salada

2007

Mike Buchanan
Tim Hollamby
Jesse Doty
Kellie McMahon
Dillan Shaw
Alyssa Blaske
Andy Boser
??

2008

Colin Sullivan
Katie Mallery
Garret Childs
Danielle Campbell
Brandon Yarnes
Elizabeth Woodhead
Phylicia Patterson
Charles Stover

2009

Alexis Jordan
Nick Sosnoski
Laura Giberson
Jordan Shaw
Sarah Augustini
Jeremy Spehar
Lindsey Olson
Samer Al-Humadi

2010

Clint Brewer
Skip Giberson
Alex Harris
Casey Caya
Devon Peace
Hannah Donahue
Jenna Fuller
Kayla Patterson

2011

Alexa Campbell
Cody Childs
Garth Childs
Jordan Spehar
Tyler Yarnes
Adrian Ziaggi
Jill Slawiak
Kristin Woodhead

2012

Kayla Welty
Jordan Smith
Will Caya
Brandon Groth
Colt Lowe
Jon Bossert
Ali Doty
Brandi Williams
Sarah Linn

2013

Emily Simon
Albanie Stives
Justine Zink
Gia George
Troy Giberson
Josh Watson
Clay Johnson
Zack Blaske

2014

Curtis Caya
Travis Groth
Brett Marcellin
Ben Waugh
Kailyn DeLaney
Brooke Lewis
Ellen Bossert
Makayla Wells

2015

Elizabeth Tkacik
Madison Clark
Elizabeth Augustini
Megan Fitzimmons
Luke Zink
Chase Swetand
Brady Stein
Brett Martin
Colin Evans

2016

McKenzi Welty
Dalton Fries
Nick Gehm
Grant Milne
Ryan Kent
Seanna Jobe
Darien Slocum
Emma Doty

2017

Colin Kloc
Ronnie Lott
Nick Stein
Matt Waugh
Chloe Dunn
Anna Wray
Erin Kalsman
Logan Thierman
Grace Emily
Alyssa Martin

2018

Haley Unverdorben
Jess Munson
Cora Witherell
Alexis Shuman
Skylar Nuffer
Dj Hlasnick
Adam Wray
Brandon Morow
Brenton Cousins
Devin Hall

I am fairly certain that people who should have been mentioned were overlooked, only due to an old guy's poor memory. I do apologize to those folks. I would like to be made aware of those omissions, so I can update this history. I am also trying to fill in the gaps where senior counselors are missing or incomplete. If you can help, please contact me via e-mail: jpiatt@portvillecsd.org