

Quest-West News

The Newsletter of
Camp Quest West



Fall 2006

THANK YOU CAMP QUEST WEST SUPPORTERS

We want to thank you for supporting Camp Quest West's inaugural year! We experienced all the standard camp fare: endless hours of boys-vs-girls keep away in the lake, relay races, team cheers, campfires, singing, s'mores, and of course, some of that hot California summer weather! Together we sampled a bit of the local flavor, jumping off rocks into the inviting South Yuba River at a well known swimming hole and visiting the local Empire

State Mining Museum where we saw the entry to one of the shafts and pictures of the young men who, 100 years ago rode down those shafts at 600 ft/minute - was that a roller coaster or what?! We caught gold fever ourselves playing a game where our two teams: the Kaos Kids and the Hippies raced to collect the most "gold" from around camp. And, we created a few treasures of our own: we made t-shirts from our own stamps and created paintings on sturdy wood, framed with pine cone, feather and other natural sou-

venirs from camp.

We had quite a few challenges through the week that encouraged the campers to think for themselves and be skeptical about simply "taking the word of authority" as the entire truth. A prize was offered to anyone who could dispute staff claims that an invisible, massless Bigfoot (who may -or may not, we're not sure- sometimes interact with people) lived at the camp. Another "so-called" authority, Beverly



Camp Quest West 2006 campers and staff.

Photo by Dwain Deets

Church, a volunteer from the Sacramento atheist/humanist groups, came as an expert in ESP, just "certain that one of us also had the talent." Openminded free-thinkers that we are, we welcomed an objective test. Unbeknownst to the campers, we had pre-arranged to have one of the girls cheat! We had the kids going for a while, but they caught on pretty quickly that one had to think carefully and evaluate things beyond face value. Similarly, we held taste tests where all items were

authority, Beverly

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**CAMP
DATES:
July 8-15
2007**

Camp Quest West will hold camp at Camp Watanda again in 2007. Camp Watanda is located on a 38-acre forested property next to a 15 acre lake. The camp is near Nevada City about 100 miles north of Sacramento.

Camp fees at an early-bird special rate is \$360 when paid early. Cutoff date and regular camp fee will be determined in 2007.

Financial assistance is available for campers with financial needs. The assistance is called a "campership." Any prospective camper wishing consideration should submit an application form (available at campquestwest.org).



A Contest for Secular Artists—HumanLight Cards and Ornaments

What do we have to celebrate this holiday season? What do you hope for in the future?

HumanLight is hosting a HumanLight card and ornament design contest for secularists of all ages as a way to positively answer these questions and more with artistic expression.

Three age categories:

Category 1: Ages 11 and under;

Category 2: Ages 12-17.

Category 3: Ages 18 and up.

One entry per artist. All media, (painting, printmaking, collage, digital art, photography, or perhaps something even more creative?) is accepted.

TO APPLY: Email the image as a high resolution (at least 300 dpi) JPEG file to humanlightcontest@gmail.com. In the body of the email, include the artist's name, age, what country and state (if it applies) the applicant is from, and what method was used to create the image.

DEADLINE for entries is November 22, 2006.

Judge: Martha Knox is a fine artist, humanist celebrant, an art teacher to children ages 4 through 17. She resides in Philadelphia, PA, and is an active member of the Humanist Association of Greater Philadelphia.

Prizes: Three images will be selected, 1 from each age category. Cards and ornaments displaying all three winners will be available for purchase at the HumanLight merchandise webpage. Each prize winner will receive

an ornament and set of cards with their image, as well as some HumanLight candy!

All images in this contest are owned by the respective artist applicants. By submitting images to this contest, the applicant agrees to grant the HumanLight Committee the right to print or otherwise re-publish the submitted images in marketing or web materials for the purpose of promoting HumanLight so long as credit is given to the artist as the original creator of the image(s). All proceeds from HumanLight merchandise sales will go toward further promotion of HumanLight. □

Check out some photos of 2006 camp activities at campquestwest.org/activities.html.

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the same - challenging campers to trust their own senses, not what we told them they should taste! We challenged the Kaos Kids and Hippies with some game theory – prisoner dilemma exercises which helped us all learn that trust and cooperation can be a good thing, but you can't trust everyone all the time or you end up a serious jailbird!

Our staff biologist devised an amazingly fun evolution game. As the teams rolled the dice, evolved, and

dealt with chance landings in habitats with speedy prey, deserts with no prey to eat and even planetary events like ice ages, we discovered that most life forms become extinct long before reaching intelligent life! David Fitzgerald & Richard Carrier from the bay area visited with tips on "Freethought Kung Fu" – advice on talking with Christians about religion, with emphasis on being well reasoned and polite – the kind of person who, over the long haul, will engender respect even from those who disagree. Mike Newdow made an appearance to help kids understand their free speech rights in school and how the constitution protects us. We ended the week with skits from the kids and staffers telling stories of freethought. The kids even wrote their own words to the camp song! □

Camp Quest West

Camp Director	Chris Lindstrom
Treasurer	Jennifer Hallman
Marketing Director	Dwain Deets

Camp Quest West is a summer camp emphasizing critical thinking for girls and boys ages 8 to 17. It is affiliated with National Camp Quest (Ohio), the first secular summer camp for youth in the history of the United States. Camp Quest was specifically designed for children of atheists, agnostics, freethinkers, humanists, Unitarians, or whatever terms might be applied to those who maintain a naturalistic, not supernaturalistic, world view. We are operating officially as Atheist Alliance, an IRS 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization and can accept checks under the Camp Quest West name. Contents © 2006 by Camp Quest West.