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under newsletter

Upcoming Events

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Adirondack Trail Blazers Head To Cortland

On Aug. 23, eight intrepid first-year students completed SUNY Cortland's inaugural version of a wilderness transition program, designed to prepare students mentally, physically and psychologically for the challenges ahead in college. There are more than 260 such programs around the country, and with Cortland's extensive history with outdoor education, it is a natural fit for our student body.

The Trail Blazers began their journey by moving into their campus accommodations the previous Sunday and boarded vans for Raquette Lake. They were joined by Amy Shellman, assistant professor, recreation, parks and leisure studies, and Jen Miller '08, M'12, adjunct faculty, and two matriculating students, Olivia Joseph and Anthony Maggio. One of the first people they met upon their arrival at Camp Huntington was Ronnie Sternin Silver '67, representing the Alumni Association board, who sponsored the opening pizza dinner for the students. One of the objectives of Adirondack Trail Blazers (ATB) is to introduce incoming students to current students, faculty and alumni, so they'll have some familiar faces to greet them on campus and have a chance to ask questions about what life is like at Cortland.

The program began with a day of team building on the low ropes course, packing food, and learning how to handle a canoe. Then, it was time to load canoes and head off to the first campsite on the Marion River. The next day took the group to Blue Mountain Lake, where they climbed two mountains, spent time on a solo, a time for physical rest and reflection away from group members, followed by shared personal stories about the road that led them to come to SUNY Cortland. On Thursday night the group returned to Camp Huntington and feasted on a hearty camp supper. Before returning to campus, the Trail Blazers tested themselves one more time on the high ropes course and wrote letters of advice to themselves to be opened at the end of the first year.

Back on campus, they connected with their roommates and other classmates for Welcome Weekend before beginning class on Monday. Shellman plans a number of informal gatherings throughout the fall to make sure the group members continue challenging themselves and finding the resources they need to succeed. There is also a plan to gather data for further study to make sure the goals of the program are being met.

Although the 2013 group was small, they all felt it was a great asset to their future. Alyssa Reid, who has already returned to Raquette Lake with her learning community, commented, "I feel I'm more ready for college. Going in with a group of friends, I feel better about going into my freshman year. It's a really rewarding experience and it gets rid of a lot of the jitters before move-in day – you should definitely do it!" The center is already making plans to promote ATB more widely to the next incoming class and looks forward to guiding its growth.

From the Director's Desk

As the final touches are made to my notes from the spring, summer and fall here on Raquette Lake, it is still a comfortable 60 degrees with bright sunshine in late October. The last two groups of the season, Student Leadership and the Outdoor and Adventure Education Learning Community, headed out yesterday, and it doesn't feel cold enough to be closing down. What a spectacular foliage display and stretch of warm fall weather we were all treated to this year!

The summer of 2013 began with the formal transfer of Antlers from the Auxiliary Services Corporation to the Cortland College Foundation and the signing of a 30-year lease with the College to operate it. The process leading up to this monumental change was long and circuitous, spanning most of my tenure here as director. A great deal of work and planning went into the arrangement, including surveys, environmental studies, business plans, and the drilling of a new water well. We are thankful for the efforts of all those involved and more than a little relieved that it is done.

One of the first major improvements will be connecting the new well to our own water filtration system in the basement of the Main Lodge. As this is being written, approval of engineering plans is pending from the Department of Health that will allow construction to begin. By next spring, we will be on our own water system, the first step in providing a longer operating season down the road.

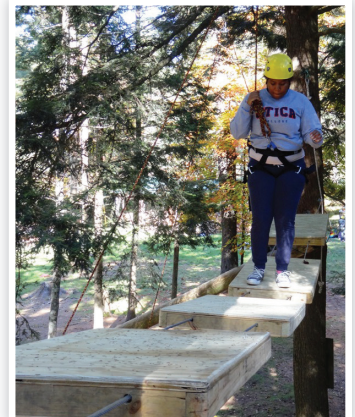
A partnership was begun with nearby Great Camp Sagamore, another Durant-built camp, that allows guests at one facility to tour the other. Camp Huntington and Antlers guests are accommodated during the daily tours at Sagamore upon request. Participants in the NEH "Landmarks of American History and Culture" were able to tour not only Sagamore, but Camp Uncas as well.

Over the course of the season, several tours of Camp Huntington were offered to Road Scholar program participants from Sagamore as part of their curriculum. Raquette Lake Navigation provided transportation and luncheon service as part of the tour and filled any empty seats up to a maximum of 60. Over 300 individuals were able to tour our National Historic Landmark through this arrangement. We are excited about the possibilities of this partnership in the future and hope to expand the educational opportunities for both sites. A special feature was added this year to the tour. William West Durant, aka Ken Hawkes from Raquette Lake, met with each group and told them about his vision in building Camp Pine Knot.

The lack of critical maintenance funds in the SUNY system this year prevented us from completing any major construction projects. Instead, our crack maintenance duo, Bob DeShaw and Richard Fey, completed a number of projects in house. The porch on the Director's Cabin was replaced, and the steps and railings on the Forsythe '58 Carpenter's Shop and Metcalf Hall were replaced. The sign at the main dock was completely repainted, and thanks to our Theta Phi Sorority friends, we have new Adirondack chairs and benches. The carpenter's shop base was repaired and repainted, along with the Blacksmith's Shop, Long Building and Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Finally, a pair of new elements was added to the high ropes course this fall. The Stairway to Heaven and Islands in the Sky provide new challenges to the many students who use the course each year. We also conducted the first in a series of training workshops for Cortland staff who facilitate the ropes course.

So it's on to the winter season. We are hoping for solid ice in January and lots of snow through mid-March. If the ice isn't cooperative, we have a newly improved trail across our Silver Beach property that should allow snowmobiles to bring food and supplies in the back way. One way or the other, we are looking forward to seeing many of you here early next year.



Spotlight on History

Seneca Ray Stoddard was a talented man, beginning his career as a sign painter. From there Stoddard learned photography and became one of the most well-known photographers in the Adirondacks during the 1880s. His techniques, specifically his use of light, placed him ahead of his time. Stoddard was also a cartographer, lecturer, poet, and writer. His photo collections were not discovered until 1960.



Stoddard wrote several guide books akin to our current I Love NY guides. The first books, beginning in 1874, of the Saratoga Springs and Lake George areas were followed by *The Adirondacks Illustrated*. The guides included boat and train schedules along with colorful hotel and proprietor descriptions.

We believe that Seneca Ray Stoddard used the darkroom at Camp Pine Knot during the Durant's ownership. The darkroom, recently cleaned and refurbished by our intern Neal Nelson '13, is located in the Forsythe '58 Carpenter's Shop. Neal created interpretive signage and chose a few of Stoddard's prints of Camp Pine Knot for display.

The room has a small entryway and shelving with a second door that opens into the darkroom itself. A sink and counter are located on the left with an upper shelf used to process the glass negatives. On the right is another shelf with a vapor chamber, where fumes could escape. The darkroom was constructed after the building was built, mostly covering an existing window minus the small red opening into the darkroom.

Stoddard photo of the leanto near the Mosely Glass Dining Room.

NEH Grant Unlocks Great Camps History

As a national historic landmark, Camp Huntington receives numerous solicitations to film documentaries and provide historic tours. So it wasn't a surprise when SUNY Cortland history professors Kevin Sheets and Randi Storch suggested submitting a grant to the National Endowment for the Humanities in its "Landmarks of American History and Culture" workshop series. The summer enrichment courses sponsor K-12 teachers from across the country who are eager to expand their curriculum in history and social studies.

The topic Sheets and Storch submitted was "Forever Wild: The Adirondacks in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era." The back-to-back one week sessions in July began with a tour and lecture of industry based in Cortland in the late 19th century before heading by bus to Camp Huntington. The teachers lived at one Great Camp and visited two others – Sagamore and Uncas – built by the founder of the architectural movement, William West Durant. Tours of St. Williams Church on Long Point and the Adirondack Museum rounded out their field trips, along with numerous lectures by the Cortland faculty and distinguished guests. A highlight of the week for both groups was an aerial tour of the three Great Camps and Raquette Lake area on a seaplane.

Each week, the group of 40 teachers, divided into four teams, explored the relationship of wilderness to culture, economics, leisure and politics. At the conclusion of the program, each group presented an iMovie on their assigned theme based on their interpretation of the material and experiences of the week. Although this was the first such NEH workshop offered by the Cortland faculty and Camp Huntington, the feedback from the teachers was quite positive. Many seasoned NEH workshop participants said this was the best program they had ever attended. Much of the credit for the smooth sailing and logistical coordination belongs to Kerri Freese, Noyce Program coordinator at SUNY Cortland, who anticipated the teachers' every need and helped build a close community in the camp.

Though NEH prohibits new programs from repeating the following year until evaluations have been properly reviewed, plans are already underway to submit the grant again for the summer of 2015. The staff was honored to host NEH Director of the Division of Education Programs, William Rice, on the last morning of the program to appraise the site and faculty firsthand. When he left, he was completely convinced this rare opportunity to experience the history of the Great Camps was a highlight of the NEH program schedule and will be back soon.

Carlson Tree Dedication



The dedication of Marcia Carlson's tree at Antlers Sept. 21 with students and alumni of recreation, parks and leisure studies.

Teacher Training for Education Faculty

The largest departmental user of Raquette Lake over the past several years has been childhood and early childhood education. All majors are required to take a three-day program in September or February before they graduate. Between 35 and 45 students are in the field four times a year. To improve program safety and quality, two professional development workshops were conducted for the core faculty. Both were made possible by support from the Faculty Development Center and the Center for Environmental and Outdoor Education.

The first took place May 16 at our Hoxie Gorge Nature Preserve and was facilitated by two former naturalists at Rogers Environmental Education Center, Fred von Mechow '77 and Marsha Guzewich. Eight faculty members were ushered through environmental education activities appropriate for K-8 students, which will be incorporated into the annual educational retreats that their majors take at Raquette Lake. At the end of the session, faculty made a list of their needs for outdoor teaching supplies which will be kept on hand for use at Raquette Lake.

In early September, the faculty came to Camp Huntington and continued training in canoe and kayak safety as well as GPS navigation exercises. They also had a chance to try some of the environmental activities from Hoxie Gorge and go through the new teaching materials. The value of the workshops was already proven during the fall sessions, when the faculty had their first chance to take the lead on using their newfound skills. From our perspective, the safety and quality of the program were improved. We plan to continue the professional development by offering a winter workshop prior to the February sessions.



Exploring a deer bone and teeth.
Photo Courtesy of Susan Stratton

Snapping Turtle Makes an Appearance



Snapping turtle planning to lay eggs on Camp Huntington's path near the Durant Cabin was encouraged to find another nesting site.

The Metamorphosis at Camp Huntington

by James Mabb (student)

When the ferry parts, our souls shed this fast paced world. When the ferry parts, the latest fashions and agendas are left behind. When the ferry parts, we tear away from what we know and transcend to a world untimely.

There is no ancient Greek devil waiting for us as we climb aboard. No reiterated tick of the overpowering clock. Just the soft hymn of wind dancing through the trees and the lullaby of a restless current. And at night, we make an audience for the sad song from the lonesome loon singing to the moon.

Raquette Lake Champion

This year's champion, Neal Nelson '13, spent his last 14 weeks at SUNY Cortland as the recreation intern at Raquette Lake. Neal started his studies as an adolescence education major, then switched to childhood education briefly before finding himself as a recreation, parks and leisure studies major. Judging from his performance and enthusiasm here, he made a good choice.

The recreation intern position provides a wide variety of experiences depending on the groups that are in camp. Neal began his internship as a student assistant during the annual Outdoor Education Practicum that all recreation majors take. Student assistants have completed the course previously and help organize various activities for students and support the instructors in the field. It is a great opportunity to peek behind the curtain and learn what makes a successful outdoor education program.



Over the course of the summer, Neal led a number of groups on extended hikes and canoe and kayak trips, something he found a great passion for. His enthusiasm for the outdoors was infectious, and everyone he worked with commented on how he made the adventure so much fun for them. His true talent emerged in the area of historical interpretation, however. He quickly gained the knowledge for and displayed the confidence to lead groups on tours of Camp Huntington, including teachers from all over the country studying here on an NEH grant.

For his special project, Neal chose to elevate the historical interpretation available on campus in three unique ways. First, he completed a project begun by Barbara Schooley '72 to identify many of the artifacts and works of art in the Durant Cabin, Chalet and Huntington Staff House. These were done in the form of reference booklets found in those buildings by visitors to learn more about who painted or created what they see around them. Next, he routed and mounted wooden signs with the year each historic building was added to Camp Pine Knot. And finally, he cleaned out and added interpretative displays to the Seneca Ray Stoddard darkroom in the Forsythe '58 Carpenters Shop, a project we have been anxious to complete for many years.

Everyone enjoyed working with Neal over the course of the summer, and we think he has a bright future in the recreation field. We wish you the best of luck with the next chapter in your life story, Neal.

New Course Offered

The childhood/early childhood students have been coming since 2000 for a three-day program introducing teaching in the out-of-doors as well as outdoor and environmental education. The students often mention that the trip is not long enough and they would like additional outdoor experiences. Chris

Widdall, instructor in childhood/early childhood and health, has figured out one way to make their request a reality.

A new course tagged Outdoor Safety Education for teachers was dawned. The students work toward their Responding to Emergencies Red Cross certification while experiencing the natural environment. The course is hybrid meaning that it takes place both online and face-to-face. The first two weeks of the course are strictly online with the face-to-face component happening at Antlers. Students read and take online quizzes prior to heading to Raquette Lake for their practical and final exams.



Widdall with students after the final exam.

Students paddled and used the low ropes course among other activities where scene safety and practical skills were discussed and implemented in detail. From abrasions to broken bones, and head injuries to CPR, the participants learned how to handle the situation.

One aspect of the course was to increase students' comfort and confidence in the outdoors by helping them understand some of the situations that could arise and how to handle them. As pre-service teachers, we hope that they carry these outdoor experiences into their careers with their future students.

Visitors From Abroad

By Orvil White

Imagine yourself living in a country where the leaves do not change color, ropes courses, climbing walls and kayaks are very rare and the temperature seldom falls below 75 degrees. Now, transport yourself to Camp Huntington at the end of September when the leaves are at their peak color and with all of the recreational opportunities are available for use. This was the situation 16 teachers and administrators from the Kingdom of Thailand found themselves in. The teachers, sponsored by the Bureau of Academic Affairs and Educational Standards, Office of the Basic Education Commission, arrived at SUNY Cortland for a professional development workshop coordinated and run by Orvil White, associate professor, childhood/early childhood education.

The three days spent on Raquette Lake were a highlight of the trip. The group spent their first day touring and learning the history of Camp Huntington. The evening consisted of a few team building activities, followed by a campfire enjoying s'mores for the first time. Day two introduced the Thai teachers to the low ropes course and boating. Having never kayaked before, it was a thrilling experience for them to use the boats; many participants even went out the second morning to watch the sunrise.



Visiting Thai teachers and administrators
Photo Courtesy of Martine White

Transcontinental Railway Reenacted

Two of the most prominent people in the building of the Transcontinental Railroad each owned Camp Pine Knot for part of its past. Thomas "Doc" Durant was Vice President of the Union Pacific Railroad and purchased the land on which Camp Pine Knot was built with the help of his son, William West Durant. Collis Huntington was one of the Big Four who built the western half of the transcontinental line, the Central Pacific Railroad. He knew Durant and visited him at Pine Knot several times. After Doc died in 1885, Collis helped finance some of William Durant's business endeavors and purchased Camp Pine Knot from him in 1895.

This fall, the history of the transcontinental railroad was recreated by a group of SUNY Cortland art students by transecting Long Point from the north and south shores, meeting in the middle with a ceremony that included driving the Golden Spike. They were led by artist and sculptor Rob Licht, a native of the Finger Lakes region who has extensive experience in the outdoors. His idea was to open the students' eyes to the impact the building of the transcontinental railroad had on the landscape it passed through by creating it in miniature across the peninsula. Wetlands needed to be bridged or bypassed, trees cut and grades ascended. In the process, the intricacies of the landscape became more apparent to the students as they discussed how to navigate it.

As the teams progressed towards the nexus point, they followed forestry tape left by the survey crew to identify the railroad route. Using map and compass, they were able to meet somewhere near the middle of the peninsula, much the way the Central and Union Pacific Railroads met at Promontory Summit, Utah. Like any good experiential education class, the real learning came after the activity. Students were better able to understand the challenges involved in opening up a route through harsh and hostile country with limited knowledge. They also reflected on how humankind's march of progress leaves the land permanently impacted in ways they had never considered. It is

creative educational programs like this, combining adventure with natural and human history, that fully realize the potential of the Outdoor Education Center at Raquette Lake.



All photos above are courtesy of Rob Licht

Alumni Opportunities

Winter Alumni Camp Feb. 16-21 - Adults Only

A true Adirondack adventure week filled with outdoor and indoor fun. By day, enjoy cross-country skiing on groomed trails, snowshoe hikes, endless photography opportunities, yoga sessions, games and more. At night, be amazed by the starlit sky, share stories and laughs with others, play games and listen to a special guest speaker. End your week with a nighttime sauna and polar plunge. Building memories that will last a lifetime.

Fourth of July at Camp Huntington July 2-6

Bring your family to spend the Fourth of July on Raquette Lake at an incredible, all-inclusive rate. All meals, lodging and activities are provided. Enjoy guided hikes, kayak tours, sailing and a climb on the Camp Huntington climbing wall. Bring a shirt or gym shorts and make your own silk screen creation. Join us on the pontoon boat for the town fireworks, followed by an ice cream social in the 1877 Glass Dining Room. Spend evenings around the campfire with marshmallows and s'mores.

NEW Young Alumni Adventure Week July 23-27 - Adults Only

This week at Antlers for alumni in classes 2000 through 2014 and their guest is packed with action! Each day you'll explore the Adirondacks by trail, kayak and even whitewater rafting. Adventure videos, time to share stories around the fire, great food, fishing and swimming round out the adventure. Sign up early for this one in which participation is limited. Price includes all transportation to activity sites, guides and fees.

Summer Sessions at Antlers June 29-July 5, July 5-11

Aug. 14-17, Aug. 22-26, *Sept. 2-5 *Adults Only

Take your family to Raquette Lake to spend quality time together. All meals and lodging are provided at a great all-inclusive fee. Enjoy hiking, kayaking/canoeing, sailing and everything else the Adirondacks have to offer. Bring a shirt or other item to silk screen. Each session will include a sunset cruise, campfires, tour of Camp Huntington and much more.

NEW Intro to Digital Photography Sept. 14-18 - Adults Only

Burdette Parks, instructor, will provide help to people new to the medium of digital photography. Become familiar with the operation of your digital camera. Also includes guidelines and tips for improving the pictures you take. The fall foliage and vistas lends themselves perfectly to this course. No prior experience necessary.

Life in the Woods Sept. 21-26 - Adults Only

Step back in time and explore the history of the Adirondacks with Nature Ed-Ventures. The course will include private tours of the Adirondack Museum's exhibition and their behind-the-scenes collections, a luncheon cruise aboard the WW Durant, tours of Great Camps, and explorations of our surrounding environment. An adventure not to miss!

For more information refer to our Web site cortland.edu/outdoor under upcoming events



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Nature Nook

Common mergansers are large long-bodied ducks that we typically see. In the spring, you may catch a glimpse of a male recognized by its white body, dark green iridescent head, and black back. Female



and immature mergansers have gray bodies a white chest and rusty-orange shaggy crested heads and are seen throughout the summer. Both sexes support a red serrated saw bill and weigh between 2-4 pounds. They spend most of their time floating, fishing and sleeping on open water.

Mergansers survive mostly on fish, but also eat aquatic invertebrates, frogs and plants. They typically forage in shallow, 13 feet or less, clear aquatic habitats such as rivers and lakes. The diving ducks find their prey by sight and can be seen searching sediment and underwater stones with their slender bills. Mergansers can stay underwater for up to two minutes.

Mergansers winter on inland lakes, rivers, and reservoirs in the southern and coastal regions of their breeding range in large flocks. They stay in these tight flocks to feed and court during the cold months. The diving ducks primarily live on rivers and lakes and nest in hollow trees in northern forests. Occasionally, mergansers will use rock crevices, holes in the ground, hollow logs or nesting boxes to nest. The nests can consist of grasses,

old squirrel nests, wood chips or shavings at the bottom of the nest. The nest can be up to 100 feet off of the ground and within 1 mile of water. After the eggs are laid, the female lines the nest with downy feathers from her own breast. The male usually abandons the nest during incubation, and the female cares for the ducklings on her own.

Mergansers will lay 6-17 eggs in one brood that can range in color from white to ivory yellow. Some females will lay their eggs in another merganser's nest increasing the number of eggs in a particular brood. The eggs will incubate for approximately one month before hatching. The little fluffy brown and white ducklings will leave their nest within 24 hours of hatching. They jump from the nest entrance where they fall to the ground and are ushered to the nearest body of water. The mother protects the chicks from predators such as eagles, hawks and large fish; the babies catch all of their own food. Their diet consists of aquatic insects during the first two weeks before transitioning to fish. The oldest common merganser on record was at least 13 years, 5 months old.

