

the autopsy was performed later that day and, according to the final autopsy report, the pathologist ruled the cause of death as respiratory arrest

sued a warrant for her arrest. She was taken into custody without incident and held in the Dubois County Security Center.



the fair Monday evening.
-- Photo by
Richard Tretter

The wonder of Anderson Woods Camp

mir-a-cle (mir' e k'l) an event or action that apparently contradicts known scientific laws and is hence thought to be due to supernatural causes, esp. to an act of God

Stories and photos by
Lisa W. Hoppenjans

Anderson Woods Camp, near Adyeville in rural Perry County, is for adults and children with disabilities. Judy Colby and her husband, David, opened the camp on land they originally purchased for a rest and relaxation retreat in 1978, inviting three individuals with disabilities for three days.

It blossomed from there.

From the moment one turns onto the drive to Anderson Woods Camp, one can almost feel the wonder of it. Campers and visitors are likely to be greeted by flocks (yes, flocks) of bluebirds, "secret" flower gardens tucked into roadside niches, vineyards, organic vegetable gardens and at least two of the four dogs in residence.

Nestled at the end of the drive are four cabins, a caretaker's/guest house and a lodge. Here, visitors experience the real wonder.

For eight weeks during the summer, cabins are filled with special people — and special helpers.

The 175-acre camp, on the edge of Ferdinand State Forest, is now in its 32nd year. It is a "teaching camp," where campers learn how to wash dishes, make their beds and set a proper table.

They learn about gardening and caring for the many animals in residence.

They craft tie-dyed, T-shirts,

painted rocks to weight picnic tablecloths and pine cones filled with peanut butter to feed the birds.

They make jam from berries they picked themselves, then make bread to put it on.

They spend their time at camp with their eyes and ears full, their hands busy, experiencing the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and feel of the world around them.

They spend their time at camp learning.

"Learning is a process," says camp founder Judy Colby. "Here, we enjoy the process. We're not focused on the end result. My work with the camp has taught me the value of the process."

Up to 18 campers attend each session, which runs from Monday morning to Thursday evening. Their days begin with breakfast, where campers take turns setting the table, serving, clearing, washing the dishes and otherwise tidying up. Campers also take turns offering thanks before meals. They make their beds and straighten up, then morning activities begin.

Animals play a huge role at Anderson Woods Camp. This year, four dogs (including Gracie, a working Australian Sheepdog, Skipper, a Manchester Terrier, Shasta, a rescued English Setter and Cindy, a black Lab in training to become a service dog for a person with autism) ramble around the

grounds at will.

In the barn, high on a hill some distance from the camp, Jacob sheep, cats and kittens, a family of goats, a donkey, four horses (all Tennessee Walkers) and peacocks are in residence. Animal care is included in campers' activities.

Campers are used to being dependent upon others. For many, caring for the animals is the first time they've experienced someone being dependent upon them.

It's a profound, emotionally moving experience for them.

"Being needed can raise mental awareness," Judy explains. "Tending to the animals — these creatures who need them — can raise the self-esteem of the campers almost unimaginably."

There is plenty of time for fun. Hayrides, catch-and-release fishing, dances on the high pasture and cook-outs are enjoyed by campers and counsellors alike.

A favorite camp feature is "our James Whitcomb Riley swimming hole," David Colby chuckles. A shallow bend in a creek feeding into the Anderson River is cut off from the current during all but the wettest weather. Camp counsellors carry buckets of water up a hill to create a mud "slide" that rivals any water park.

Swimming is followed by washing up in the eight new outdoor showers.

Many campers have attended

since Anderson Woods Camp's inception more than 30 years ago. It leaves a deep impression.

"We lost track of one of our campers," Judy relates. "We didn't see him again for 16 years. But he remembered us."

For many campers, it's the first time they've ever been away from home.

"But I think that's harder on their parents," David grins.

The wonder of Anderson Woods Camp does not just extend to campers, however. The counsellors are a story in themselves.

Counsellors each receive a \$2,000 scholarship to the college of their choice for a summer's work.

Camp, for them, begins with

a four-and-a-half-day training session, during which they learn about autism, safety and first aid. At the end of the training period, an interdenominational service is held, where staff and helpers are anointed to serve.

The service is held in the camp's "Prayer Circle," a clearing near the cabins. Primitive benches circle the area, which (Continued on back page)



Anderson Woods campers Rachel and Ron set off with counsellor, Sarah, in search of nice, flat rocks the campers will paint to be used as picnic tablecloth weights. Gracie, an Australian Sheepdog, provides an escort.

Anderson Woods Camp, located in rural Perry County, was established by David and Judy Colby in 1978. Although their backgrounds are in the insurance business — not special education — the two share a calling to help the disabled.

Anderson Woods Camp

(Continued from front page) is carpeted with wood mulch. On the edge, a large gazebo-like cage houses white doves.

The service is moving and, "we invite the parents so they can see what we see in our young people," Judy says.

Many counsellors begin as volunteer "helpers," some as young as 12 years old. The counsellors come from a variety of fields of education, but many wind up changing their educational focus to special education or therapy fields.

And, like the campers, many come back, year after year.

"We have 26 years of experience between five of our counsellors this year," Judy praises.

Anderson Woods Camp did not always have four dormitory cabins. Initially, campers slept in tents. But each cabin, in its turn, has been a miracle.

"We found an old log barn near Evansville and the owner said we could have the logs," Judy relates. "But the barn was dilapidated and full of debris. It was just too dangerous to try and gather the logs."

Dulcimer lessons and concert at Patoka Lake

Join in a session for mountain or lap dulcimer music lessons with Paoli musician Randy Tuell at Patoka Lake Visitor Center on Saturday, August 15, at 11 a.m. Bring a lap dulcimer (not required) or just join in and listen to tips and techniques for playing a mountain dulcimer or lap dulcimer.

Play one of the available dulcimers (while supplies last). Hear the music of the mountains, songs from yesteryear. This lesson session is geared for begin-

The owner called a short time later. A tornado had razed the barn and cleared the debris, depositing it in a nearby field. The logs were lying on the ground. All they needed to do was pick them up.

"But the older lady told me she couldn't give us the logs. 'My sons are selfish,' she said. 'They said I had to sell you the logs.' So she did," Judy grins, "for \$1."

Mother Nature had a hand in another improvement made at the camp just last year.

Hurricane Ike neatly cleared a wide path between the two newest cabins, while leaving the cabins untouched (all cabins are nestled in clearings in a heavily wooded area).

The two newest cabins are a gift of love, born of tragedy.

Wes Powell, a former camp staff member, died in February, 2008. A student at the University of Kentucky, he had spent seven summers at Anderson Woods, four as a volunteer and three as a camp counsellor.

His parents, Alan and Karin

At 1 p.m., enjoy traditional and old time music with lap dulcimer musicians Randy Tuell and Denise Popp in concert. From ballads to lively dance tunes, all are sure to delight listeners of all ages. Come along for a fun afternoon of music.

The entrance fee to the property is \$5 per vehicle for Indiana residents (\$7 out of state). Patoka Reservoir is located north of Wickliffe on SR 164. For more information regarding this program or other interpretive

Powell, own a construction company based in Henderson, KY.

They built the two beautiful new cabins as a memorial to their son, who loved Anderson Woods Camp.

The camp employs 12 full-time staff this year — two counsellors per cabin, plus the camp director, a nurse, a nursing assistant and a cook. Either David or Judy is always on-hand.

Neither David nor Judy is paid for services — the camp is a labor of love. Most of its funding comes from United Way of Perry County, along with several Knights of Columbus clubs and lots of private donations.

"Every Christmas, a lady in Tell City sends us \$5," smiles Judy.

Camp fees (each camper pays \$150 per session) provide less than 25% of the cost.

But needs continue to be met.

Improvements to the camp have been the result of several Eagle Scout projects.

The camp is a pet project of some Best Chairs employees. Men from Best Chairs built the benches in the camp's Prayer Circle, while women made drapes for the new cabins.

An individual from Newburgh built and donated bunk beds for one of the new cabins.

A company donated a walk-in freezer ("a blessing!" Judy avers).

The list goes on and on.

It seems as though anyone who visits Anderson Woods Camp is touched by its magic.

During one session, campers staged a talent show the last day of camp. David and Judy, along with campers and staff, were highly entertained.

"Everyone has some kind of gift," Judy reflects.



Megan and Isaac, the new Mr. (one day soon it will be "Dr.") and Mrs. Gatwood, are pictured with campers, Maudie and Joe.

The newlyweds hope to open a camp of their own someday, since neither believes they can exist without special people in their lives.

The greatest of these is love...

Isaac Gatwood, of rural St. Meinrad and Megan Keusch, of Jasper were married on Saturday, June 20.

They were back at Anderson Woods Camp on Sunday evening.

"We can honeymoon any time," shrugs Megan, with a grin.

"We love the camp that much," Isaac smiles softly.

Isaac, now entering his second year at IU School of Medicine, serves as Camp Director, his fourth year in that capacity and his ninth year at the camp.

Megan, who teaches special education in Indianapolis, is serving in her fifth year as a camp counsellor.

"They really didn't like each other that first year," chuckles David Colby. "She thought he was a jerk. He thought she was a

girly-girl who didn't have what it takes and would never fit in."

During Megan's second year at camp, the two began dating. Isaac was then attending Notre Dame University on a full scholarship and Megan was studying at Ball State University.

Although this has been a joyful summer for the new Mr. and Mrs. Gatwood, it has also been bittersweet.

It may be their last summer as full-time staff.

"We don't know if it will work out next year," sighs Isaac. "With med school, I really won't have the whole summer off."

"It will be hard if we can't," Megan agrees.

"But we may be able to come part of the summer," she glances hopefully at her new husband. "Maybe we can volunteer for a few days."

Neither believes they can exist without "special" people in their lives.

The two share an ultimate goal — to one day open a camp of their own.

"It's the best job a person can have," beams Megan.

"But it will be awhile before we can make that happen," Isaac smiles, ruefully. "Eight weeks out of a year is hardly a career."

Meanwhile, Megan will continue teaching and Isaac will continue med school. Isaac plans to become a primary care physician with a focus toward those with disabilities.

They will no doubt be back next summer, if only for a visit.

"You never really leave this place," says Megan.

At A Glance

The Executive Board of Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission will meet Tuesday, July 28 at 6:30 p.m. (local time) at the Commission

Thursday, July 30 — 2 p.m., Creature Feature.

UMWA members, retirees, wives and surviving

Little Miss and Mr. Contest are now on sale at the Jasper Chamber office at 302 West 6th Street.