

A tip or two from Chief Keokuk

### CAMPOUT COMMUNITY

In our father and child program of Indian Guides and Indian Princesses, it is the Campouts which are the highest form of community. We pack up our belongings, gear, headdresses, fire pits, cooking equipment, everything but our own bed, and drag this stuff to a distant camp where we set everything up again and enjoy time with our kids and other dads. We get to know each other. We share in the joys and travails of fatherhood and (I hesitate to use the word, but there is only one word for it), yes, we bond. We bond with each other and we bond with our kids. We even bond with the places we go, the stories we tell, the activities we create and the ceremonies we celebrate.

And you can't bond, if you don't go.

Our campouts are the work of good men: the brotherhood of Nations Chiefs who keep this program spinning from campout to campout and event to event. Our Nation Chiefs are truly the best men I know. I am thankful every day that I am surrounded by these good men who dedicate themselves to making Indian Guides and Indian Princesses a thriving community.

I am also thankful that I have never missed a Guides or Princess Campout. It's been many years and many campouts with my four children. Attendance has been no accident. It's a deliberate act of scheduling. Campouts were, and are, fixed in my calendar with the same weight and priority as any important event or appointment. No force of man or nature, no distance, no professional matter, or home issue every stood between me and a campout with my young braves or little princess.

But I have not always been enthused to attend every campout. There have been times when I had to drag myself out of my routine to get to a campout. But once I made it to camp, it was like falling off a log. Before long my enthusiasm always grows and there I am, having a good time with my kids and the dads of my Tribe, Nation and Federation.

At the last Princess Winter Campout the weather was mild and damp. We were at Sherman Lakes which is very spread out in the rolling hills of central Michigan. So my daughter Katie and I shared a number of walks back and forth from the cabin to the dining hall. We took the time to chat about her life, our family and whatever was on her mind. On Saturday night after the Daddy-Daughter Dance, we walked in the darkness back to our cabin, down the meandering, paved path through the woods.

"This is the best winter campout ever Dad!" Katie exclaimed.

"Really!" I was surprised. "You've got to be kidding sweetie. There's no snow."

"We don't need snow."

"Why is that?" I asked my daughter.

"Well," Katie paused collecting her thoughts. "I just like to talk to you, Dad."

I thanked Katie for her companionship and we sauntered on in the darkness, holding hands, walking up the path to our cabin. This unforgettable moment was delivered to my daughter and me through the intersection of two things: our participation in the campout, and the community of good men who made the campout a reality.

Spring Campouts are now on the horizon. The dates are set, so pencil them into your calendar now. Better yet, use a pen. In your PDA, select the highlighting option. Set the alarm. Seize the opportunity to attend: inform your office, tell your wife, clear the decks and be there. Participate in the community of your campout. Rise to the occasion and your Indian Brave or Indian Princess may just surprise you with their gratitude.

Peace,  
John C. Lorenzen,  
Federation Chief Keokuk