



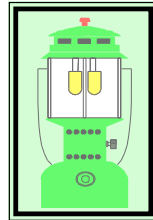
ISSUE 20

CAMP SHAMROCK NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2005

FROM LESLIE MCKAY

It's coming near to camp time again and I hope you all are planning to come to camp. Sheba asked me to write an article for the magazine so I am writing to campers and when I think of it I never was a camper myself! When I first came in contact with Camp Shamrock I was past camper age! I got involved in the practical side of things ~ putting up lights and working with them etc. That was over 30 years ago and I'm still doing the job.



Of all the things I have done during my 50 odd years I can truly say that Camp Shamrock is the most fulfilling. I look forward to July each year, the events around camp, and being with the people who have been at camp during the years and those who return year after year to help.

When I think of the sunsets and sunrises (although I haven't seen too many of the sunrises!) in Tollymore Forest, the trees, the river, and the mountains, somehow it's easy to forget about all the bad things that go on in the world and get lost in God's handiwork. I can't think of a better place to hold Camp Shamrock. The Lord has truly blessed us with such a good site where we can enjoy each others friendships ~ even though it's not always dry!

It's so good to look to the past and to remember many good times that have been spent at camp around the fire. Unfortunately because of forest regulations we can no longer have these magnificent fires but don't worry, we are working on ways around it!

We hope to hold camp shamrock for many more years to come. The Board of Directors do have long term plans for camp and this will only be possible if you all continue to come both as campers and helpers.

Looking forward to renewing old friendships this year!

Leslie.

Inside this issue ~

Page 2 ~ Choices Page 3 ~ Avoca Youth Weekend Page 4 ~ Scars
Page 5 ~ Dates and Information Page 6 ~ Blessings

It was the 1930's and the day started out normally for John Griffin. Unfortunately it didn't end that way. John was a controller at a railway drawbridge over the Mississippi River and for some reason this day he decided to take his son to work with him. His son was fascinated by everything and couldn't help walking around viewing it all.

It was nearly lunch time and John had just finished putting the massive bridge up. He was hungry and so he sat down to grab a quick bite before lowering the bridge again in time for the Mississippi Express train which would soon fly past. Soon John heard the familiar whistle of the train roaring towards the crossing. He leapt up from his chair and went over to the observation deck where he would throw the control switch that would lower the bridge for the train. Glancing down his heart stopped! His son had been wondering about and had fallen down into the gears and trapped his leg in the cogs!



Desperately he tried to devise a rescue plan...but there was no time. His son was down there but there were 400 passengers on the train that would shortly fly past him. John knew what he had to do. Burying his face in his arm, he pushed the master switch just in time to lower the bridge into place as the train thundered across, taking the life of his son.

He raised his head slightly, tears filling his eyes and looked into the windows of the train. There were businessmen casually reading the paper, ladies sipping coffee and children eating ice cream. Nobody had even looked at the control room or glanced down at the great gearbox. In agony John cried out, 'I sacrificed my son for you people. Don't you care?' But as the train rushed by nobody heard the anguished father's words.



It's an awful thought isn't it? A choice no man would ever want to make, yet John knew he had to choose to lower the bridge and save the 400 passengers even though it meant his only son dying.

As we consider the cross where God sacrificed his son for us, we should remember the anguish that he went through too. I'm sure he's thinking the very same thing as he looks down on us ~ Don't you even care that I sacrificed my Son for you?' We live our lives like there's no tomorrow and sometimes don't even consider the pain that was suffered on Calvary ~ even though it was all for us! So, remember that Easter isn't the only time to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus – as people who love God and know what He sacrificed in order for us to live, we should celebrate this great sacrifice daily.

AVOCA YOUTH WEEKEND

Thanks to all those who arrived down in Ovoca Manor for the annual youth weekend organised by Clark and his comrades. Any feedback I've had from the kids was positive so we're grateful to all of you who helped in any way to organise the activities, transport, cooking and most importantly the lessons.

Colin Graham ~

'Why we should believe in God?'

'Why does God allow suffering?'

Peter Maguire ~

'Why am I here?'

Kevin Mullins ~

'Why does it matter?'



We had about 70 people who arrived on a cold frosty night down in Ovoca Manor – they came from all parts of the UK for a weekend which they had hoped to be packed full of fun and as usual, Clark made it possible for them! The weekend started officially on Friday night after dinner with a few

icebreaker games so that everyone could get to know each other then Clark said a few words to introduce everyone, to explain the purpose of the youth weekend and of course to give the dreaded rules (which were broken within hours!!) We then sang a few songs before heading off to bed. After a very long sleepless night, we started our Saturday morning with a wonderful lesson from Colin Graham explaining the theory of Evolution in conjunction with what Christians believe. After that we had some free time until lunch and once Colin gave us his second lesson, we all went out to the big outdoor slide for a bit of fun. The adults were just as keen if not more so than the children even though it was quite large and dicey! Some of the boys even chickened out once they seen it. We then had some more free time until dinner, which we spent down in the sports hall playing football, basketball and even girls footie. After yet another wonderful meal from the cooks, we had our final lesson of the day from Peter, who showed us the wonders of science and the reason for us being here. On Saturday evening we had some more games and free time and again another sleepless night!

Sunday morning was our final lesson of the weekend which came from Kevin, who reminded us 'Why does it matter?' After services and another wonderful meal, we all packed our bags and said goodbye to everybody for another few months.

The youth weekend was a great success and so a big THANK YOU goes out to all those who helped organise it in any way. Also thank you to all the kids who arrived – especially those who travelled from the UK to be with us. We appreciate it! We hope you had a great time and remember, camp is only round the corner!!!

SCARS

Some years ago, on a hot summer day in south Florida, a little boy decided to go for a swim in the old swimming hole behind his house. In a hurry to dive into the cool water, he ran out the back door, leaving behind shoes, socks and shirt as he went. He flew into the water, not realizing that as he swam toward the middle of the lake, an alligator was swimming toward the shore. His mother, in the house and looking out the window, saw the two as they got closer and closer together. In utter fear, she ran toward the water, yelling to her son as loudly as she could. Hearing her voice, the little boy became alarmed and made a U-turn to swim to his mother. It was too late. Just as he reached her, the alligator reached him.

grabbed her little boy by the neck and snatched his legs. That began a tug-of-war between the two. The alligator was much stronger than the mother, but the mother was much too passionate to let go. A farmer happened to drive by, saw the mother and alligator, took aim and shot the alligator. Remarkably, after several weeks and weeks in the hospital, the little boy survived. His legs were full of scars. And, on his arms, where his mother's fingernails dug into his flesh in her effort to hang on to the son she loved.



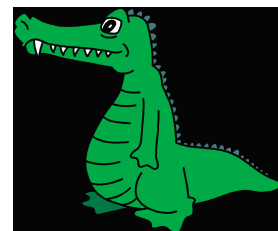
From the dock, the mother saw the mother arms just as the alligator reached an incredible tug-of-war. The alligator was much stronger than the mother, but the mother was much too passionate to let go. She heard her screams, raced from her house, and after several weeks in hospital, the little boy was extremely scarred by the vicious alligator's arms, where deep scratches were dug into his flesh.

The newspaper reporter who interviewed the boy after the trauma, asked if he would show him his scars. The boy lifted his pant legs. And then, with obvious pride, he said to the reporter, "But look at my arms. I have great scars on my arms, too. I have them because my Mom wouldn't let go."

You and I can identify with that little boy. We have scars, too. No, not from an alligator, but the scars of a painful past! Some of those scars are unsightly and have caused us deep regret. But, some wounds are because God has refused to let go. In the midst of our struggles, He holds on to us.

The Scripture teaches that God loves us. We are children of God. He wants to protect us and provide for us in every way. But sometimes we foolishly wade into dangerous situations, not knowing what lies ahead.

The swimming hole of life is filled with peril – and we forget that the enemy is waiting to attack. That's when the tug-of-war begins - and if you have the scars of God's love on your arms be very grateful. He did not, and will not, ever let you go. God has blessed us richly so wear your scars with pride – knowing that some of them are because of God's love for you.



Pack your bags...

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? ONCE AGAIN **CAMP SHAMROCK IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!**



Camp has been running now for over 35 years and we hope to keep doing this for a while yet so we want you to help us do this by appearing down at Tollymore for another week of fun and games. The dates for this year are

Boys Camp
Monday
11th July
to Tuesday
19th July

DOWNLOAD AN APPLICATION NOW

<http://www.campshamrock.org>

Girls Camp
Thursday
21st July
to Friday
29th July

The price is £60 sterling and we promise to give you value for your money! We will have the usual activities including bouldering, swimming, hiking and of course the dreaded tent inspection!

If there are any activities that you would like us to organise for you then please let us know and we will try our best to do that for you. Remember the camp is for YOU.

An application form will be sent to all those who were at camp last year closer to the time but if you would like one sooner to keep your place you can contact either Bert or Sheba or you can download the forms from our website at www.campshamrock.org and post them off to Bert.

The theme of camp this year is running along with the one we had at Ovoca on the subject 'Why?' where Clark hopes to teach you all about how we can experience God and learn more about Him through the lessons in the forest.

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE

S
G
Z
-
S
S
F
L
B

I asked God to take away my habit.
 God said, No. It is not for me to take away, but for you to give it up.

I asked God to grant me patience.
 God said, No. Patience is a byproduct of tribulations; it isn't granted, it is learned.

I asked God to give me happiness.
 God said, No. I give you blessings; Happiness is up to you.

I asked God to spare me pain.
 God said, No. Suffering draws you apart from worldly cares and brings you closer to me.

I asked God to make my spirit grow.
 God said, No. You must grow on your own!, but I will prune you to make you fruitful.

I asked God for all things that I might enjoy life.
 God said, No. I will give you life, so that you may enjoy all things.

I ask God to help me LOVE others, as much as He loves me.
 God said...Ahhhh, finally you have the idea.

Camp Shamrock



BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE

- ♣ Protecting our children
- ♣ Setting good standards
- ♣ Implementing good practice

Our aim at Camp Shamrock is to do all of the above, and in doing so, try to build a better future for the next generation by teaching them about Christ and encouraging them to live their lives for Him.

For further information regarding Camp Shamrock, or about this newsletter please visit our website at

<http://www.CampShamrock.org> or contact

Bert Ritchie, 14 Craigaboney Road, Bushmills. BT57 8XD (028 20731180)
 or Sheba Clinton, 26 Ashton Drive, Coleraine, BT52 1NW (028 70327296)