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Moraga man marks half-century of summer camps

By Cathy Dausman



Moraga resident and longtime camper Jeff Werth
Photo Cathy Dausman

Jeff Werth would rather interview than be interviewed, but he talks easily about his longtime commitment to summer camp.

Werth is somewhat of an expert on the swimming, fishing, hiking, basketball and arts and crafts he does in the Napa hill country, and for good reason. For the last 50 years he has attended Enchanted Hills Camp on Mt. Veeder – a camp run by Lighthouse for the Blind that serves blind children, teens, adults, deaf-blind, seniors and families of the blind, offering recreation in a fun, challenging and accessible way. Werth has only

missed one session since 1968, because of illness, and his family thinks he may also be the oldest resident in attendance. He's 64.

His six-day session in late June is tailored for blind and special needs campers. It's the whole experience that brings him back, year after year, from the cooking (he says the camp's spaghetti dinner, prepared by Chef Israel was his favorite meal, adding Israel cooks better than his mother does), to his cabin mates and counselors. Ask about his favorite event and he'll tell you it was "chapel."

The only thing Werth won't do is go horseback riding – he draws the line at grooming the animals, as the camp requires its riders to do.

Initially Werth's camp was a two-week experience, but the sessions were shortened in the mid-1980s to allow for more participants. Fearing Werth would be homesick during one long camp session, his family wrote to him daily. But his counselors got tired of reading all his correspondence, so Werth put his foot down and told his family to send no letters, no post cards.

"It's always been fun to go," Werth says of this long-standing experience. If fellow campers seem anxious at first about being away from home, he insists "they'll get used to it." His family has always said he could call and ask to come home early but he has never wanted to. The one concession Werth makes for camp is not shaving – he leaves his razor at home.

The result, says his brother Steve, is that the normally cleanshaven man looks a bit like Grizzly Adams when gets off the bus. But the tradeoff seems worth it, and as Werth sang at this year's talent show, "Don't worry ... be happy."

For information about the Lighthouse for the Blind Enchanted Hills Camp, visit lighthouse-sf.org/programs/enchanted-hills/.

Family Focus

Signs You May be Over-Indulging Your Children: Part One

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

Just about every good parent indulges or even overindulges his or her kids at one time or another. This is part of the pleasure of parenting – to be able to helpfully and lovingly address your children's needs and desires. This column, however, addresses how consistently indulging your children too much can lead to unintended consequences. Children who are used to being catered to by their parents may not fully develop adequate self-discipline and empathy for others. They may automatically challenge authority in school, sports, or with adults in general, and become argumentative and rebellious. We want to teach children to stand up for themselves of course, but not to overreact to every correction they receive.

Here are a few ways parents may inadvertently be too indulgent:

- **Not insisting on good manners.** For example, your children interrupt you without saying excuse me and waiting for you to give them attention. They don't ask to be excused from the table. They don't say please, thank you, and hello and goodbye to you and others.

- **Letting them wear you down with their persistent crying, whining or nagging after you've already said no.** In other words, their negative behavior pays off and gets reinforced.

At an early age children can learn that parental preferences prevail over theirs. As long as parents act benevolently and firmly, even humorously at times, while providing training, children will eventually respond. They may need consequences of course, but that is to be expected. It helps to be calm, not emotional, while administering them. As a previous column mentioned, it works well to show reluctance when you need to give a consequence.

Yes, we're all preoccupied or distracted at times, but it is important to be consistent in addressing this behavior so it will eventually be extinguished. With a younger child, you may need to just tough it out, telling him a reluctant "no" and then something encouraging. For example, "I know you want ice cream, but unfortunately we can't stop to get it right now. Maybe we can tomorrow, but only if you stop crying now." If he stops crying, be sure to get him ice cream the next day and tell him it's because he listened well and stopped crying right away the day before. If he doesn't stop crying, ignore him until he stops and definitely don't get him ice cream the next day. Wait until you're pleased with his behavior for any reason before you take him for ice cream the next time, and of course let him know why you're doing it.

With an older child, you can establish rules ahead of time. It helps to offer an explanation along with your initial "no" so your child won't feel dismissed. You may decide that she gets one chance to rebut your "no" if she is calm and polite, and you certainly can change your mind if you want. But if you stand by your decision, you expect her to respect it even though you know she's not happy with it.

It is important to allow for discomfort in

a parent-child relationship. It will eventually pass, and you can always figure out new ways to make him or her happy on your own terms if you want. But if you try too hard to immediately fix a disagreement, your child will sense that he or she has the upper hand. Part of a healthy family dynamic is when a child can recognize and accept a parents' authority even though they may disagree with an outcome.

- **When your child has problems with others, automatically believing their version without first considering all possible sides of the situation.**

It is important to listen carefully to your child when he or she is upset, to give them empathy, and to even agree with them initially. You will be showing caring and trust in them, which is a loving response. But in reality you don't want to automatically trust his or her perspective without checking out the facts.

For example, it is common for a child to complain to a parent that a teacher is picking on them. The teacher may very well be correcting their behavior often, but it is frequently because the child is misbehaving. A child doesn't always see the cause and effect of their own actions, and can sometimes feel they are being treated unfairly. (Of course sometimes the fact that a certain child is frequently disruptive in class may cause a teacher to make an inaccurate assumption that this same child is acting up again, even if he isn't). It is important for parents to have a healthy skepticism if a child says he is frequently a victim in various situations, and to dig for more information.

One 8-year-old boy I saw, "Evan," complained that the kids in his after-school program were mean and didn't want to play with him. I urged the parents to check with the director of the program. They found out that their son was making mean faces at some of the younger children, was grabbing toys and puzzle pieces from others, and was basically the cause of his own unpopularity. After we learned this information, we were able to help Evan become aware of his own behavior and to make positive changes.

Be aware whether you are consistently providing the leadership in your parent-child relationship, or if too often your child is managing to lead you instead. Remember, it's never too late to change your approach.



Margie Ryerson, MFT, is a marriage and family therapist in Orinda and Walnut Creek. Contact her at 925-376-9323 or margierye@yahoo.com.

In Memory

Carolyn Bowman Wolf

Carolyn Bowman Wolf passed away Thursday, Aug. 17, her 65th birthday, at her home in Lafayette, California following a 4-year back-and-forth battle with cancer.



Born Carolyn June Bowman and raised on a dairy farm in West Unity, Ohio, daughter to Joline (Shaffer) and Lloyd Bowman, Sr., she began playing piano at a 7 years old and teaching piano at 14. She left home at 17 to tour the Midwest and Pacific Northwest with musical groups and entertained for a short time on cruise ships out of New York City and Fort Lauderdale before ultimately settling in the East Bay Area in Northern California. On May 7, 1994, Carolyn married Edwin Paul Wolf at a ceremony in Danville, California.

Her passion and career was music; she continued to work as a voice and piano teacher as well as accompanist and/or music director for numerous community theatre programs, singing groups and churches. She worked in varying capacities at Hillside Covenant Church in Walnut Creek, California, including Music Minister, for a total of 38 years.

She leaves behind her husband of 23 years, Edwin; 3 stepsons: Logan (Megan) Wolf of Lafayette, California; Leigh Wolf of Washington D.C.; Landon (Kayla) Wolf of Rocklin, California; and 1 granddaughter, Mackenzie; as well as her mother, Joline, of Bryan, Ohio; sisters Jane (Irvin Fender) Fry of Auburn, Indiana; Linda (Dana) Smith of Bryan, Ohio; Beth (Alan) Surfus of Markle, Indiana; Sandy Bowman of Bryan, Ohio; Annette (Ron) Zaper of White House, Ohio and brother Lloyd F. (Susan) Bowman of West Unity, Ohio.

She was preceded in death by her father, Lloyd W. Bowman, and a sister, Susan Bowman.

Memorial Service will be held Saturday, Sept. 23 at 1 p.m. in the Sanctuary of Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church with Pastor Jeff Reed of Hillside Covenant Church officiating. For questions or more information or to submit photos, music, or stories of Carolyn, please email CarolynWolfLegacy@gmail.com.

'Train Driver's Diary'

... continued from page B3

Solidarity and love seeps through these gruff characters. They do not judge, they seldom blame and they deeply care.

In an interview given to CineEuropa at the end of last year, Director Radović said that the subject matter could have been made into a tragedy, but also into a tragi-comedy. He chose, in his own words, to make a film that would be touching, warm, gracious, tragic, and funny – all in one movie.

The actors are all very powerful, including newcomer Petar Korać who plays Sima. He portrays the candor and naivety needed for this touching character. Korać

is supported by strong, professional well-cast actors.

"Train Driver's Diary" was selected as the Serbian Academy of Arts and Science's submission for the Academy Awards Best Foreign Language Film category, and received the audience award at the Moscow International Film Festival in 2016. The film is a welcome respite from a formatted big production, and is a fine example of Eastern European movie productions. It will open at the Orinda Theatre for one week, starting Sept. 15. For more information, visit lamorindatheatres.com.