



# Eagle View Newsletter

Volume XIX

Success Oriented Achievement Realized

Fall 2006

## SOAR's 30th Anniversary- A Cause for Reflection and Celebration

By Jonathan Jones, Executive Director

It is hard to believe we stand on the doorstep of SOAR's 30th Anniversary. It seems like yesterday when Wandajean and I were exploring the Hill Country of Texas, searching for the next adventure for our Houston-based SOAR group. But that *yesterday* was thirty years ago and the year was 1977. The first Star Wars movie had just hit the big screen and SOAR was a fledgling outreach project of the Spring ACLD. I vividly remember the faces of that first SOAR group- the Labonte brothers, John England, Kee Mullinex, Wendi Lovingood, Donna Greiner, Phil Lyons, and so many more. They were an incredible group.



The early years of SOAR

So much has changed since those early years. Our first group of SOAR participants numbered twelve. This year we served six hundred youth in our summer program alone. The weekend programs of those early days have diversified to multi-week summer courses and semester-length programs stretching from Florida to California. The four-person volunteer crew is now a year-round professional staff of twenty-six. The "fly by the seat of our pants" administration process has been replaced by all of the policies and procedures you would expect of an American Camp Association accredited program. Instead of working out of a home office, we now have two incredible outdoor learning centers in North Carolina and Wyoming. But for all of these changes, SOAR's cornerstone remains- the celebration of the uniqueness of youth with LD and AD/HD.

For all that has changed, so much is still the same. SOAR staff are still committed professionals willing to live not so ordinary lives. SOAR continues to celebrate the diverse interests of our students by creating new courses and discovering new course sites. The Peruvian Amazon and Andes Adventure is our latest creation. At its root, SOAR celebrates the achievements of youth who come to us knowing much more about failure than success. To that end, the recognition of SOAR's 30th Anniversary is really a celebration of the incredible talents and abilities of SOAR participants. The following is a "short list" of those traits and abilities that have caught my eye over the years:

Inventiveness	Imagination	Observation Skills	High energy level
Action-Oriented	Artistic ability	Musical ability	Service-oriented
Care Giver	Visionary	Leadership	Compassionate
Sensitive	Tenacious	Intuitive	Random Learning style
Adventurous	Spontaneous	Adaptability	Quick thinking
Flexibility	Persistence	Resilience	Divergent thinker
Risk Taker	Fun-loving	Unpredictability	Sense of Humor
Curiosity	Bold	Creative	Passionate

No doubt, the successes of our youth is linked to the development of these innate talents, gifts, and abilities. Such has been our legacy of the past thirty years. More important still, this will remain SOAR's foremost priority for the next thirty years.

INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER

- A WORD FROM BIG JOHN
- AND THE WINNERS ARE...
- SUMMER REVIEW
- STUDENT PROFILE
- STAFF MEMBER PROFILE
- SEMESTER UPDATE
- IZZY'S CORNER
- A LETTER FROM A FAMILY

## A WORD FROM BIG JOHN...

*Director of LD &  
AD/HD Services*



In the spring of 1989 I discovered what I wanted to do with my life. I was an intern for a small not-for-profit program serving youth in Austin, Texas. The name of the program was called Middle Earth Counseling Services. During the second month of my internship we facilitated an overnight experience at a local camp, providing 100 youth with a chance to complete a low ROPES course experience. "WOW", I thought to myself, "Wouldn't it be great if you could make a career out of giving kids this type of experience?" Sure enough, it was possible to do so and that new life goal put me on a path that eventually led me here to SOAR. I found drive and purpose that had previously eluded me. I know that finding and setting goals can be elusive, frightening, and very frustrating. It also seems this can be especially difficult for the kids we serve, but along the way I learned a terrific approach to setting and accomplishing goals. It is called APIE (Assess, Plan, Implement, Evaluate).

Like so many other individuals diagnosed with learning disabilities and AD/HD, I often jump right into the Implementation phase of this formula. I have recently come to realize, as I work with kids and try to help them utilize this form of goal setting and problem solving, that implementation is a valuable part of the equation. I do not skip the Assess and Plan components, but my initial effort of implementation is really part of my assessment. I realize the value of failure, as each failed experience gives me new opportunities to make a plan, and perhaps set new goals.

The next time you encounter an opportunity to work towards something with your child, try out this system. Jump right in, see what you learn, then formally begin to assess the following: what is my goal, what are my resources, what are possible options. Then help your child formulate a plan, implement the plan, and finally evaluate your progress and see if new opportunities and solutions have presented themselves to begin again with a new assessment. Good luck and let me know how it goes!

John Willson

## AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Each summer SOAR sponsors a student Photo Contest. Congratulations to **Ryan Toth** of West Hamptead, NY for his winning photo, "So Close Yet You Can Not Touch" taken during his FL Standard Course.



Also, a big congratulations to **Charles Johnson**, the winner of our **Christmas Keys Adventure Drawing!** Thanks to everyone who completed your summer evaluation forms. We appreciate your invaluable feedback!!

## SUMMER REVIEW

*By Laura Pate, Director of NC Programs*

Wow, it's hard to believe that the summer is already over! It seems like just yesterday we were preparing base camp, training staff, and getting ready for students to arrive. And did they arrive in droves this year! We had our largest enrollment ever in SOAR history with 591 students. And what an amazing summer of activities! We had our inaugural Peru course and our first Wyoming Advanced Horsemanship course. Each of these programs were such a success, and we are excited about offering them again next summer.

Our North Carolina Courses saw the introduction of new course areas such as the Nantahala National Forest. This amazing program area is known for its scenic views and rugged, exciting terrain. This summer each North Carolina group got the opportunity to create their own group flag on the first night of each course. This of course resulted in some good-natured flag stealing among various crews. We also ended each course with a celebration featuring a course slideshow and dessert (check out SOAR's website at [www.soarnc.org](http://www.soarnc.org) to download photos from your course). We are also excited about our updated high ropes course, featuring a continuous belay system. We will be the only High Ropes Course in the Country with this unique feature!



*Emmy Klint-Gassner displays skills learned in our Wyoming Advanced Horsemanship Course this summer.*

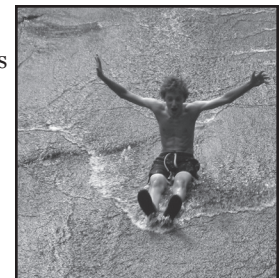
Eagle View Ranch in Wyoming continued to fully develop activities such as riflery, canoeing, and our own mechanical bull, affectionately named "Mighty Bucky". Our Specialty SCUBA course in Florida had another successful year, certifying 12 students. And the California Standard Course expanded to four courses to accommodate increased interest and enrollment. All of this while maintaining safety and fun! Thanks to each and everyone of you who helped make this summer such a success! We hope you had as great a summer as we did, and we look forward to seeing you again next year!

## STUDENT PROFILE:

**Charlie Aboussie**, 15 years old from Washington, D.C. has been coming to SOAR since 2005, when he participated in the North Carolina Adacademically Gifted course. His counselors quickly recognized his potential, and nominated him for an ILS position. Charlie returned this summer to successfully complete two Standard Courses as an ILS, which allowed him to work on his leadership skills.

**What are some of your hobbies?** I play golf, basketball, and play other sports with my friends. I like hanging out with friends, and just having fun.

**What has been your favorite SOAR experience?** My favorite experience was being an ILS during the summer of '06.



*Charlie having fun at Sliding Rock in Pisgah NF.*

## FALL SEMESTER UPDATE

By Andy Biddle and Jon Bressler

### Appalachian Trail Semester:

This Fall the Appalachian Trail Semester started off on a great foot! The semester crew is made up of 7 enthusiastic young men from all over the country. They are all excited to be able to learn how to cook, and plan all aspects of their lives here at SOAR, both key areas in developing critical life skills.

They have started the academic section of the course, and are learning about the civil war and the history of the Native Americans. Their field trips to the Cherokee Indian Museum and the Pisgah Wildlife Education Center help facilitate their experiential learning styles. The first backpacking expedition took them to the beautiful Linville Gorge Wilderness. It was a new experience for each of the students, and an exciting challenge! They completed a section of the AT in the Nantahala National Forest, and are preparing for their Southeast River and Rock exploration. On this trip, they will be rockclimbing, whitewater rafting, and spending a night in Whorley's Cave in Tennessee.



AT Semester Students Backpacking on the Appalachian Trail in the Nantahala NF.

### Yellowstone Semester:

It has been a beautiful fall in Dubois, WY and the semester is off to a terrific start! Each group has already enjoyed Yellowstone National Park with a multi-day backpacking trip on Shoshone Lake. I have gotten reports of Elk bugles, buffalo sightings, and even some moose. Chris and Angie's team took a tram up to the base of the Tetons and



Yellowstone Semester Group A, led by Chris and Angie, in front of Yellowstone Falls, Yellowstone NP

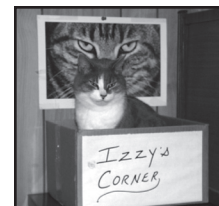
enjoyed some high elevation hiking. Students are greatly enjoying school (some for the first time ever). So far the homework is getting done more and more consistently and the students are feeling confident- but with Charlotte teaching who wouldn't? The firewood piles are growing as students help stockpile a winter's worth of wood. Hondo, the new camp dog, is enjoying all the affection from the students and also all the activity. Students are also helping finalize the foundation for a log cabin that will get built throughout the semester. The students are really getting to know each other and themselves, and the prospects for an outstanding course are great! I write this as we are having our first snow but now the sun is poking out.

Happy fall to all!

Jon Bressler

## IZZY'S CORNER

By Wandajean Jones and Catey Terry



Well, its that time of year again, when things seem to quiet down a bit, and it becomes easier for me to take a nap. The air is turning cooler, which means one thing: the staff begin to bring their fleece jackets to work. I've found the jackets add a little more cushion to the chairs I like to sleep on. Plus I enjoy being able to help the staff out by adding some of my fur to their fleece, which I know will add extra warmth for them. As everyone is always saying "Izzy, you've gotten fur all over my jacket!"

Anyway, I miss the sound of kids laughing and playing and scratching my chin. I also miss Brooke, who after five years, has left to pursue her dream of becoming a nurse. It's my understanding that a nurse is someone who takes care of others, which I know Brooke will excel at because she always took such great care of me and the families at SOAR. However, I won't be sad, even though she is not here, as I know she will continue to visit. As a matter of fact she came by here yesterday to see me. I let her know real quick that she needed to pick me up! As we visited, I took the opportunity to once again add fur to her fleece to help keep her warm. "Uh-oh, I've got Izzy fur all over me", Brooke exclaimed, "She probably smells the new kitten my girls got this weekend. That kitten likes to snuggle on my jacket too! Well I have to dash, I guess Izzy is enjoying my chair now that she doesn't have to fight me for space!"



Izzy enjoying a nap on Catey's Fleece

As I see Brooke off, I smile because I know we'll get to see her again and hear how nursing school is going for her. Hey I have an idea... maybe they should make me the Camp Nurse at SOAR, since I take care of all my SOAR friends! And now another good idea, I think its time for a nap, now where is Catey's fleece?

## STAFF MEMBER PROFILE

Up Close With...Andy Biddle

### What is your job?

I am the Director of North Carolina semester course. I also oversee the maintenance and logistics for Balsam Base.

### What are your hobbies?

I love playing bluegrass and folk music, backpacking, rock climbing, white-water kayaking, theater, and teaching people about the outdoors.

### What person or people do you admire most and why?

My old bosses at college. They were more than supervisors, they were mentors and friends.

### What do you like about SOAR?

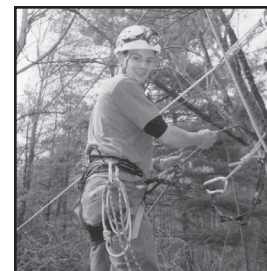
I like watching our students and staff grow everyday, and I get the chance to improve myself as well.

### People would be suprised to know...

I used to go into schools and teach about reptiles.

### If you could travel to one place, where would it be?

New Zealand





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**SPRING ADVENTURE  
 WEEKENDS 2007**

**Concentration, Communication &  
 Cooperation**  
 April 20 - 22  
 (Horseback Riding or High/Low Ropes)


**Spring Family Weekend**  
 May 11 - 13  
 (Whitewater Rafting)

**Social Skills & Team Building**  
 June 1 - 3  
 (Whitewater Rafting or Rock Climbing)

**CHRISTMAS KEYS ADVENTURE**

Join us for some fun in the sun on our Christmas Keys Adventure!  
 A six day tropical adventure in the Florida Keys which includes swimming, snorkelling, fishing, tubing, sea kayaking, sight-seeing in historic Key West and the opportunity to become PADI SCUBA certified!

Dates: December 27 - January 1  
 Contact: Ed Parker, Admissions  
 828-456-3435 or ed@soarnc.org



**A LETTER FROM A FAMILY...**

**Introduction by Jonathan Jones:** *Recently, I read Ned Hallowell's book "Delivered from Distraction." While not minimizing the positive benefits of medication, Dr. Hallowell made a strong case for nutrition and exercise in the effective management of AD/HD. This recent letter from a SOAR alumni family points to such benefits.*

Dear Jonathan,

You will remember our son, Bobby (now Rob) Fishburne who was a SOAR camper for nine years. Rob has Asperger's Syndrome but has always been very high functioning, making 1420 on his SAT's and graduating from UNC-Asheville. Rob has never shown any ability to plan ahead, was easily distracted and never saw the logical outcome of a course of action. He has a full-time job at Client Logic, answering the phone for Earthlink to work with angry customers who want to quit Earthlink's Internet service. Until recently he was having a difficult time there due to late arrival and being unprepared to work. In Early August we introduced him to a nutritional supplement made by Reliv, Inc., a network sales firm from Chesterfield, MO. Six of their 18 products are patented -- the only nutritional supplements so honored. Within a week, Rob began to change. He became more responsible and, at the end of August, was honored as Client Logic's outstanding employee of the month. He wasn't late, he planned ahead and he carried out his plans to an extent that astounded his parents. The key to this improvement is his nutrition. Reliv is 98 percent absorbed at the cellular level, vs. just 20-25 percent for pills. Once the cells begin to receive the proper nutrition, the body apparently begins to heal itself. Rob told me "the fog in my head is gone, Dad. I used to have trouble planning things. I could see what I had to do, in general terms, but I couldn't make a plan. This month it was different. I could see the steps I would have to take to get to my goal. Why didn't you put me on this when I was younger?" I didn't have an answer except to say, "We didn't know about it. I'm sorry." Had we known we would have told the world, including Project SOAR. Reliv isn't a medicine and it doesn't claim to replace any medications. But I encourage parents to give it a try. It's nothing more than powdered food, taken with 8 oz. of water, designed and patented by a molecular biologist, the same one who invented Enfamil, the substitute for human breast milk. Any of your readers who want more information should contact me, Bill Fishburne, at 828-274-9696, or at [bfishburne@bellsouth.net](mailto:bfishburne@bellsouth.net).

Thanks,  
 Bill Fishburne

**Visit our Website at [www.soarnc.org](http://www.soarnc.org)**