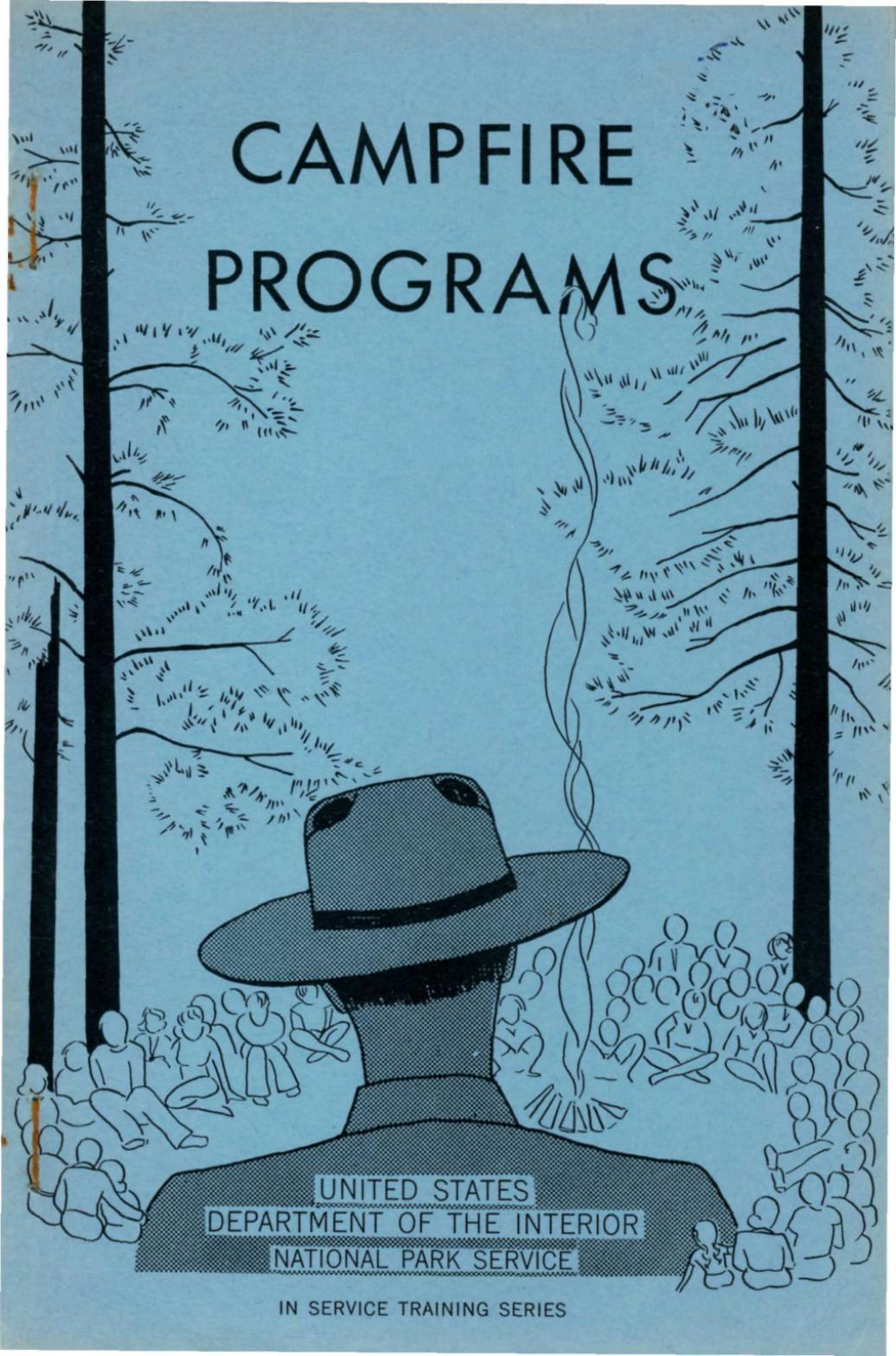


CAMPFIRE PROGRAMS

A stylized illustration in black and white on a light blue background. In the foreground, the back of a person wearing a wide-brimmed hat is shown, looking towards a campfire. The campfire is a central focus, with a tall, thin flame rising from it. A group of people is sitting on the ground around the fire, some looking towards the viewer and others towards the fire. The background is filled with the silhouettes of trees, some with detailed foliage. The overall style is simple and graphic.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

IN SERVICE TRAINING SERIES

CAMPFIRE PROGRAMS

TRAINING BULLETIN
FOR
FIELD EMPLOYEES
OF THE
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



IN-SERVICE TRAINING SERIES

1955

FOREWORD

We are pleased to present the third in a series of National Park Service aids to interpretation.

The campfire program has a tradition almost as old as the Service, and it is one of the most popular and valuable services we render. This booklet is dedicated to the continued high standard of this traditional service. It attempts to make available for training and reference use some of the experience, imagination, and contributions of ideas and skills of hundreds of men in Service uniform who have gathered about firesides with hundreds of thousands of visitors through the years.

H. Raymond Gregg, formerly Assistant Chief Naturalist and now Regional Chief of Interpretation, Region Two, Omaha, Nebraska, organized and prepared the manuscript. There have been many contributions of ideas, cover design, illustrations, and helpful review by many members of the Washington Office staff. Special acknowledgement is made to Principal Naturalist Howard R. Stagner, the author of *Talks* and *Conducted Trips*, for the portion of the manuscript on community singing leadership. We are proud of the teamwork which has gone into the production of this booklet. May it contribute much to maintain the high standards of the National Park Service campfire programs.



Conrad L. Wirth
Director

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CHAPTER I THE CAMPFIRE TRADITION

*But see--a spark, a flame, and now The
Wilderness is home.*

--Edwin L. Sabin

The glowing fire that dispelled the fearsome darkness also dissolved or kept away the real or fancied dangers that lurked about the camps of primitive man. Thus tamed by man, wildfire which was in itself a frequent terror, became a giver of security, making the night a time of rest, relaxation, and close fellowship around the fire. Thus, the roots of the modern campfire tradition lie deep within the human race, and they have been nurtured through our rise to civilization.

The records of ethnology are rich with knowledge and lore of tribal rituals centered about the ceremonial fire. In much of civilized society of historic time, the spiritual values of the family fireside gathering have flourished, and widely persist against the materialism of our age. The spirit that made us a free people, and the genius and fortitude that produced a great nation on this new continent owe much to the close social, intellectual, and spiritual intercourse around the family hearth at the close of day.

As the explorer and pioneer penetrated the American wilderness, the frontier campfire, from which the modern campfire program descended, came into being. Its cheerful flame, aromatic woodsmoke, and glowing coals were comfort by night in the westward march of empire on this continent. The first national park traditionally was conceived by the light of a campfire. By the end of the first



THE FIRST CAMPFIRE IN YELLOWSTONE

World War, when people were coming in numbers to the yet little-developed parks, it had become a common practice for campers in these areas to gather about their neighbors' fires as night fell. There they exchanged experiences or stories, sang together, and enjoyed good fellowship. With the coming of naturalist leadership into the parks in the early 1920's, this friendly impromptu custom grew into planned campfire assemblies. These retained the flavor of informality, group participation, and the atmosphere of the wilderness, formalized only in that a naturalist, ranger, or invited guest gave a talk or led a discussion upon some outdoor theme.

Refinements have come, variety has been introduced, and the number of participants has increased tremendously in a typical national park campfire program. To remain a campfire program, an activity should retain certain characteristics. Among them are the atmosphere and benefits of the fireside and its association, appeal to those human emotions and traits, and satisfaction of those needs of people which are linked with the campfire setting. The participant should be led to clear conclusions or the desire to do something about the matter discussed in the program. He should clearly understand something about the purpose and character of the park, and his relationships and responsibilities to it. Of paramount importance, he should depart emotionally warmed, carrying with him the spiritual energy of the campfire.

CHAPTER II

THE CAMPFIRE PROGRAM IN CONTEXT

Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth
--James III, 5

The National Park Service campfire program is a tool for welding the visitor's random experiences and impressions into well-developed understandings, appreciations, and satisfactions relating to the values which the Service is charged with preserving. In this sense, the relation of the campfire program to the other program activities of the park is somewhat analogous to that of the science of ecology to the separate biological and physical sciences upon which it rests. Where there are other contacts and opportunities for visitor experience with the specific or detailed stories of the area, the campfire program will serve its greatest usefulness as an opportunity for establishing the real values and meanings of the park. It should provide the visitor perspective to relate interests, experiences, and pursuits as parts of the whole scheme of things in the park.

To illustrate this, a campfire theme may be wildlife. If you were giving such a talk, you obviously would introduce representative animals and give some basic information about them. If your talk went no further than this, it would be a mere subject matter discussion, however complete and well organized, and would fall short of its possibilities. The talk should relate the animals to their environment and to each other so that interrelationships are evident. In such a talk you would make it clear that the individual animals or species affect or are affected by each other, by

the plants which grow about them, by the soil upon or within which they live, by climatic factors, and by the cycle of the seasons. You should help the visitor understand man's participation in and impact upon this whole intricately interrelated environment, so that he is aware of the influence his presence, his actions, and his attitudes toward it have upon the welfare of the wildlife and, in fact, upon the whole of Nature as it exists in the area.

Your talk should include pointers on how and where to observe wildlife in the area. Some of the internal wildlife problems of the area and the effects of widely ranging park animals upon other interests outside the park boundaries should be introduced to point up some of the complexities of management and the reasons for park wildlife policy.

At the end of the program, you will have led the visitor through a realm of thought much broader than mere information about the animals themselves. He will see the place and the relative importance of wildlife in the total resources of the area. If your presentation is well-developed, he will leave the program with a sense of having discovered new things of which he is a part and a beneficiary. He will feel a responsibility, in which his voice should be heard. This "ecological" approach is a far cry from a mere talk on the animals.

The campfire program comes at a time of day when darkness limits the range of activities available to visitors. Often it is the only public function in the park during the evening hours. As such, it is an important social institution. Under no circumstances should a "captive audience" attitude be allowed to develop. Particularly in campgrounds, the campfire circle may serve as an

evening community center where people gather to visit and engage together in pleasurable common activities. In conducting a campfire program, you should approach it in this spirit. Whatever you have to say will then be well received.

The atmosphere of the park, the relaxed spirit, and even the inclination to meditation on the part of the people at the end of the day are all in your favor. Such conditions are ideal for dealing with broader themes such as philosophies of parks and their intangible values. Even so, you must remember that your visitors have little desire for grimly purposeful "educational" activities on their vacations. But, without being conscious of it, they are easily led to what John Burroughs called "education by the way."

A "box office" approach is not needed to attract and reach the audience. You need never lower your program standards on the justification that "the people like it," or "this is what the people want." Most people want what the park has to offer or they would not be there, nor would they participate as they do in program activities. That being true, any well-conducted park-related program, presented by you as an interesting and well-informed person, will have as ready acceptance as conventional types of entertainment. This is not to say that as a park interpreter you have a particular interest in reforming people's entertainment habits. You do have an opportunity and obligation to capitalize upon the visitor's existing interests or those aroused by experiences in the park. Through these interests, you can widen understanding of the values of the park and the importance of these values in the whole scheme of conservation.

This process, properly handled, has great value as entertainment for people who are enjoying the immediate benefits of direct experiences in the park. And the constructive aftermath of new thinking and action regarding these things by those participating in these programs is immeasurable.

In summary, your job as a campfire program leader is to meet a diverse group of visitors on their own ground, and to establish a pleasant social relationship with and among them. In this atmosphere, you will use well-conceived program techniques to combine your offerings and their separate experiences and opinions into impelling conclusions concerning the important natural or historical values of the area.



AN EXAMPLE OF IMPROPER SEATING

CHAPTER III SITUATIONS AND SETTINGS

What is the fireside, if it warm but one?

--R. U. Johnson

Fundamental physical elements of a campfire program are simple, rustic facilities, a canopy of the skies, surroundings that partake of the wilderness or the camp environment, and, importantly, the light and animation of the campfire. On the human side, there are a pervading atmosphere of informality and fellowship, and a spirit of participation.

The campfire circle may be located near a hotel or lodge, in a campground, at a point convenient to both campground and hotel or lodge, or at a reasonable accessible point selected for other considerations.

The facility may be extremely simple, with no more than a fire pit and logs or rocks for seating where people in a campground gather in the evening. The use of such a facility may consist of mere friendly social intercourse, spontaneous informal programs involving only the campers, or scheduled programs of similar intimacy in which the campground ranger or a member of the interpretive staff provides leadership and presents a well-prepared informal talk.

There are special types of informal "campfires" in connection with trips such as Rocky Mountain National Park's alpine caravans and some of National Capital Parks' "Evening Adventures." These have elements in common with, but are not classifiable as campfire programs as discussed in this booklet.

The next magnitude of program is that in the small-to-medium campfire circle, or amphitheatre. In this type of facility no sound amplification is necessary, and the physical arrangement is conducive to the informality of the impromptu campfire described previously.

The major campfire circle or amphitheatre is a larger operation serving several hundred, but not more than 1,000 people. Except in settings with unusual acoustic properties, it is ordinarily necessary to provide sound amplification in such large facilities, thus introducing a mechanical element that may decrease the qualities of informality and direct personal relationship of speaker and audience.

Here, it may be pointed out that the desire to preserve atmosphere must be tempered with reality. If conditions are such that the normal, unstrained human voice is not clearly heard by the entire audience, it is sensible to bow to the mechanical age and use voice amplification.

In some situations such as the Sylvan Theatre programs in National Capital Parks, and the "campfire programs" at Gettysburg National Military Park, special conditions make it necessary to dispense with the fire. This represents a loss in the physical atmosphere of the campfire program. A large audience because of its very size, tends to change it from participant to spectator in character. There are many who believe that an amphitheatre which greatly exceeds a capacity of 500 does not retain enough of either the physical or social aspects of a campfire to be considered a campfire program facility. However, it is not the purpose here to establish quantitative criteria.

Possibly remarks of Park Naturalist Paul E. Schulz of Lassen Volcanic National Park in a talk at a California State Parks naturalist training conference will serve as an example of thinking on the matter of facility size:

Our circle seats 350 persons, and we do not use an amplifying system . . . When (in) excess of 350 persons we will conduct additional programs. We are convinced that we can serve the public far better by two one-man conducted programs of 350 than one two-man program of 700.

The approach and quality of the presentation in any outdoor setting *can* preserve the spirit of the campfire program except as unity and receptive mood of the audience are lessened by the physical arrangements. There are several large, and some fireless campfire circles in the National Park System where effective "campfire programs" are held.

Natural factors, such as predominately inhospitable climate, or irrepressible insect nuisance, make outdoor campfire programs impractical in some areas. Under such conditions, centrally located indoor lecture centers or public space in a concession building make possible a service substantially the same, except for outdoors atmosphere and the campfire itself.

Projected visitor use buildings, which will serve regular day-long information and interpretive needs of the visitor, and existing museums with a spacious hall, such as Moraine Museum in Rocky Mountain National Park, may also serve for campfire-type programs. These may either be regularly scheduled in lieu of impractical outdoor programs, or as alternates for campfire programs on rainy

nights. In a number of cases, a room of modest capacity is regularly used in early and late seasons when crowds are small and nights too cold for campfire programs.

Someday, a plan may be developed for an "amphiclimatic" lecture facility which would make possible either outdoor or indoor programs where good and unfavorable weather conditions are a toss-up, much as the "outdoor-indoor" swimming pools has met seasonal requirements in many communities. Such a dual facility is in the luxury class as far as the National Park System is concerned. As a practical matter, the established policy of the Service is to develop only outdoor program facilities except in those places where prevailing conditions regularly make indoor programs necessary.

As a general rule, if conditions are such that campgrounds receive regular and substantial use, there is a place for campfire programs *in the campgrounds*. The campers are equipped both mentally and physically to cope with insect nuisance or to endure chilly and damp conditions. Even on cold and wet nights, campfire programs in campgrounds in some areas draw audiences almost as large as those for programs under favorable conditions at the same site.

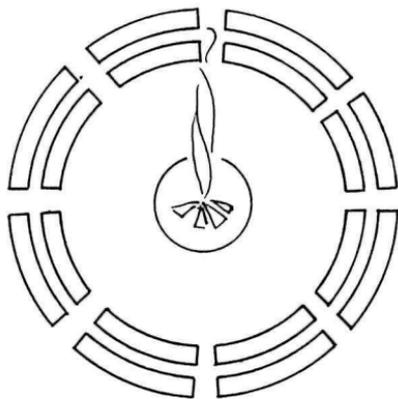
In a fairly compact area, where visitors are divided between campgrounds and concession accommodations, one program may be made to serve both groups. Campers, as a rule, will travel farther to a central campfire circle, on bad nights, than will patrons of hotels and lodges. This fact may influence site planning. If the facility is to serve both groups, it may be advantageous to place it as close as possible to the hotel or lodge.

There are no "pat" answers in facility planning. Each problem is different. Interpretive personnel and landscape architects and architects should work as a team in its solution. This should be borne in mind in reading the next chapter, which deals with basic facilities and physical arrangements. The discussions there are to acquaint you with some of the facility types and planning problems. Read them only as guidelines in these matters, written from the viewpoint of the person conducting the program.

CHAPTER IV FACILITIES AND PHYSICAL FACTORS

*What! is this not my place of strength,
 built for me,
 Where the strong foundation stones were laid
 --Tennyson*

In the areas administered by the National Park Service "campfire circle" is a general term used to describe a facility designed basically for evening outdoor programs. Design and capacity vary greatly according to the situation. You will find it most satisfactory if the capacity is proper for normal rather than peak loads. In a few cases, principally in campgrounds where electric power is not available, or where by tradition and desire programs are confined to group participation activities and unillustrated oral presentations, the structure is a true "campfire circle." Such a facility usually consists of a fire pit, with seats arranged in concentric circles around it:

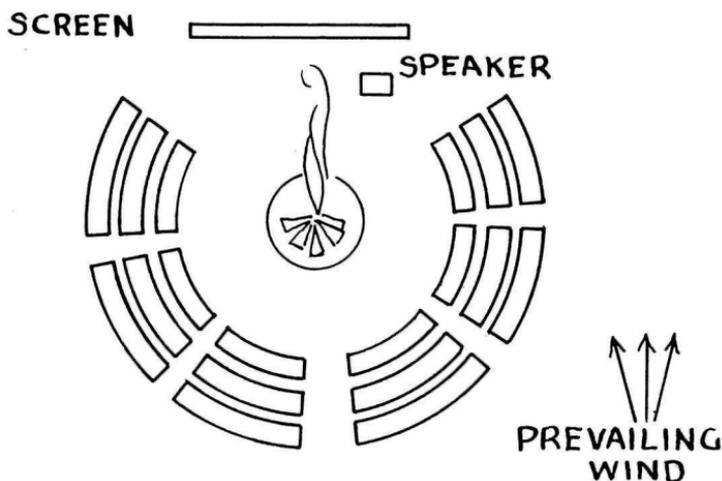




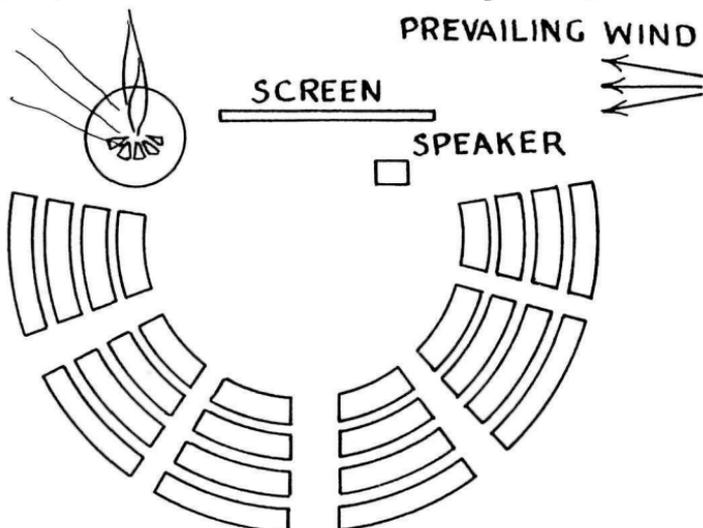
A HOT FIRE!!

There are fundamental advantages and deficiencies in such an arrangement. It satisfies the romantic idea of gathering around the fire and provides the closest possible proximity to the fire for the number of people seated. It has the disadvantage of putting nearly half of the audience behind the speaker much of the time, however frequently he shifts position or plays the Whirling Dervish in trying to give attention to the entire group. The speaker also may generate more physical heat than inner warmth while penned against the fire during an enthusiastic performance as song leader, story teller, or speaker with gestures. He will always be across the fire pit from some of the group and further detached from them by smoke and the voice-deflecting updraft of the fire. This is not serious until the audience gets too big for the speaker to be heard.

A three-quarter circle or semicircle, with seats arranged concentrically away from a fire pit, puts all of the audience in front of the speaker and has the same advantages as the circle for those in the audience:



The speaker now has no one behind him, but almost half his audience is still across the fire pit from him, again posing a problem if the seating capacity is large. By changing the position of the fire pit, this situation can be improved:

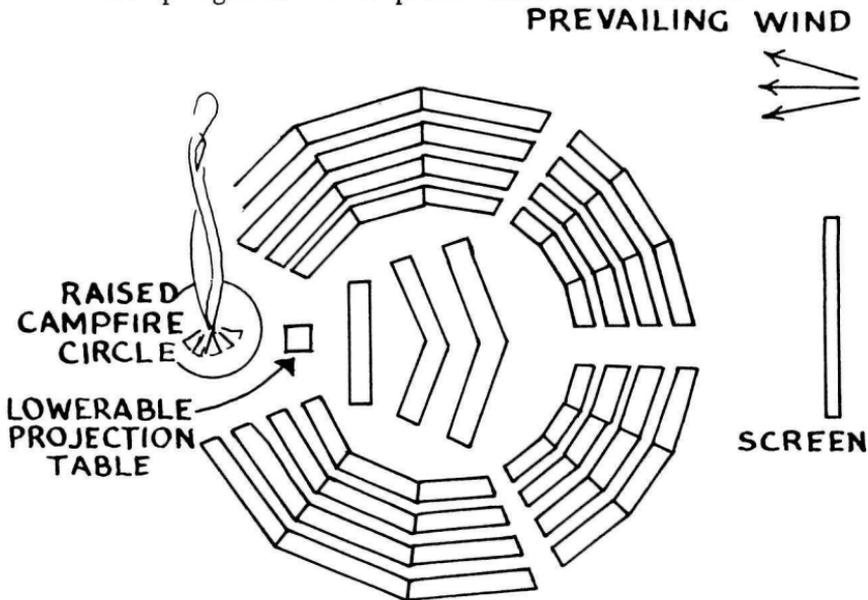


The fire is visible to all, even though they are no longer "around it." The speaker now faces all of his audience without obstruction, and his voice does not have to penetrate the updraft of the fire. If it is desired to project slides or motion pictures, it can be done without the projection beam having to pass through the smoke and heat currents from the fire. The new angle of fire to screen also reduces the intensity of light reflection upon the screen. Where projection is to be used, a center aisle arrangement is preferable, so that no one is seated behind the projector, or in line with the projection beam.

The circle, and to considerable degree, the semicircle, should be pretty much restricted to places where the group is small and the program is entirely informal and orally presented. However,

as many as 350 persons are served by an adaption of the circle at Manzanita Lake in Lassen Volcanic National Park. Park Naturalist Paul E. Schulz has described this facility and the advantages he has found in its use:

"Picture the circular campfire plan and then interchange the locations of the central fire with the segment of seats behind the conducting naturalist. This eliminated the 'dead spot' and still leaves the feeling of sitting 'round the campfire'. The screen is behind the audience, a portion of which will do a 'turnabout' to view the projection screen during the latter portion of the program. The plan looks like this:"

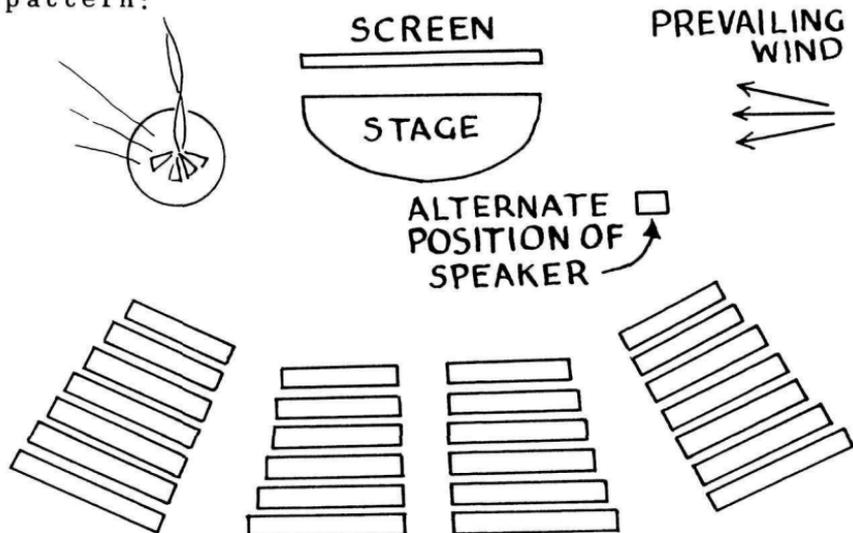


Actually, this "Lassen plan" is a modification of a plan designed for one purpose and now used for another. Much of the success attained in its use comes from the quality of program and skill of the

leader rather than from any exceptional virtue of the revamped facility. Certain limitations should be pointed out. First, it requires relatively level terrain to provide satisfactory visibility of the screen from all seats. The screen must be at a height which may cause an uncomfortable neck position for those seated closest to it. People along the sides of the arena must sit in a sidelong position and view the screen with head at an angle or straddle the benches in clumsy tandem.

The Manzanita Lake circle involves a controversial design feature. In this plan at least part of the seats must be flat, without fixed backs, so that people can do a "turnabout." Folding, or reversible backs are mechanically possible, but impractical. Many of those who plan or conduct campfire programs are convinced that seat backs are necessary to comfortable seating. They are especially convinced of this when the facility goes beyond an informal fireside gathering place for campers or small audiences. Others are equally convinced that seat backs are an undesirable formalizing influence. The idea has been advanced to have backs on the front rows of seats. This might encourage compactness of audience. When crowds are well below the capacity of the facility the psychological effect upon the speaker of filled front seats might be good. Preachers apparently think so, although they are not known to resort to such a discriminating device to herd the congregation up front. There are persuading sentiments and arguments on both sides of the question of seat backs. The issue is recorded here without prejudice but with the passing comment that where programs exceed 35 to 40 minutes it may require almost hypnotic powers for the speaker to sustain audience interest and attention over the insistent demands of an aching back.

The usual national park amphitheatre is a refinement of the half circle on this general pattern:



The practical amphitheatre where projection is to be used is a compromise between ideal grouping and ideal viewing.

It is desirable to have the widest feasible seating arrangement with corresponding decrease in depth. This brings the maximum practicable number of the audience as close as possible to the speaker, the screen, and the fire. An "aroundness" arrangement generates fellowship and participation. A long, narrow seating arrangement has the flavor of spectatorship.

The beaded screen is widely used in National Park Service campfire programs because of its added brilliance and depth of image when viewed from a proper angle. Pictures on a beaded screen will appear dark outside a line at about 45° to either side of the center line of the amphitheatre. Should "3-D" stereoptic projection ever come into vogue

for campfire programs, the satisfactory viewing angle would be further reduced to about 30°.

With a highly reflective flat white or aluminum screen surface, it is possible to use seating out to about 60° from the center line before viewing becomes unacceptable. In most instances, amphitheatre capacity is such that normal crowds can all be seated within a 45° angle. The outer and less desirable seats accommodate late arrivals in peak crowds. The wide seating plan permits use of front seating at the outer edges to bring more of the group close up front during the campfire-centered introductory period of the program. If the feature program involves projection, those seated outside optimum viewing angle can be invited to move to more favorable empty seats toward the center and rear before the speaker is introduced. This actually involves little more interruption than the "turnabout" movement necessary in the "Lassen-type" circular seating arrangement. In this connection, you can help shape up a compact audience during the introductory period by urging that all seats be filled by moving in toward front and center. Put it on the basis of neighborliness and avoidance of late arrivals having to cross in front of those seated.

In *Park Structures and Facilities*, published by the National Park Service in 1935, there is an 8-page section devoted to campfire circles and amphitheatres. This section discusses basic considerations in planning. It also contains photographic illustrations and ground or section plans for six examples representing varied types of installations. Unfortunately, this valuable reference is out of print, but it should be available in most park libraries. Numerous more recent plans are available only in master plan files of

the Service. It should be reemphasized here that campfire-facility planning in the National Park System is accomplished in the orderly processes established. Thinking is crystallized into Development Outline Proposals on which architectural and landscaping plans are based. Construction follows in due order through the Project Construction Program. This chapter is merely an aid to thinking concerning the influence of use upon the design of the facility.

It is proper here to discuss briefly a few key planning factors which relate to program use of the campfire program facility.

Serenity is a prime asset in a campfire program setting. A most important consideration in site selection is avoidance of extraneous light and noises. Terrain, vegetative screening, and distance should be used to best advantage to exclude the lights and traffic noises of busy roads or parking areas.

Good composition of the crown line of the enclosing trees can materially enhance the esthetic quality of the whole setting of the campfire program facility. A study of the forest silhouettes on a proposed site at night may be helpful in planning selective cutting necessary in the site development. Especially important is the background for the stage and screen. In your programs, make maximum use of the setting. For example, use trees as height scale, or as species examples that fit into your talk. Conspicuous rock outcrops or a large glacial boulder can be handy 3-dimensional illustrations in your talk. Porcupine "patching" on the trunk of a pine, picked up in a flashlight beam, would far excel the best slide you could use to key into a discussion on the food habits of this animal.

For a semicircle of amphitheatre arrangement, a bowl-shaped site permits economical development of sufficient slope in the seating area. This is important, so children or persons of short stature can see the screen over people in the row ahead. This will help parents to keep children seated with them. Where visibility is poor because of a flat slope, children are inclined, and parents are inclined to permit them, to gather on the front row or on the ground before the front row, where, unsupervised, they may create serious disturbances. At best, they pose a problem to the leader to maintain control over them. Greater height of the screen can also improve viewing, but there is a limit in that viewing must be comfortable from the lowest seats at the front.

The sitting surface of the seats should be about 18 inches above the floor level in front of the seat. This is perhaps more important to audience comfort than backs on the seats, especially for taller persons. Campfire circle seating has been observed in which a tall man was hard put to see the screen over his own knees. This makes logs laid flat on the ground undesirable for seating, since sound trees of sufficient diameter are not readily available in most parts of the country, and if they were, their higher value for lumber might make their cost prohibitive.

The space between the rows of seats should have a level floor and should be at least 18 inches wide. This will provide comfortable position for the spectators' legs and feet, provide easy access to inside seats, and make cleaning easier. Benches or seating surfaces should be a minimum of 12 inches wide from front to back. The use of three 4-inch boards spaced an inch apart has been found generally excellent. There may be a slight waffling



SMOKE GETS IN YOUR EYES

effect upon stout spectators, but the 14-inch width of the combined surface is satisfactory for comfort, and usually there is far less damage from warping and splitting damage than in wider and more expensive plank seating. Repair and replacement costs are much less also. Perhaps it is superfluous to say that in a constructed facility, the seating should be maintained as nearly as possible splinter-free and should have a flat surface. However much sitting on round logs man may have done during his long period of evolution, he has not ended up with an anatomy shaped for it.

Prevailing winds affect site planning. An otherwise perfect spot might be a complete loss if winds regularly drifted smoke across the seating area. In the true circle, which usually is small, it is impossible to escape completely the drift of smoke in some direction when there is a noticeable wind. However, this can be minimized by good site planning to use the shelter of natural vegetation or terrain. Landscape planting can add to the wind-break effect completely around the circle, so that most of the smoke normally rises directly upward. If effective protection against wind cannot be accomplished, it would be better to build a half or three-quarter circle, or an amphitheatre, with the open side and fire pit down wind from the seating area.

The placement of the fire pit to the left or right at the front of the amphitheatre also will be governed by prevailing wind direction, as indicated on the sketches, so that ordinarily the smoke will drift away from, rather than across, the front of the projection screen. In some places, where audiences of 600 people or more are gathered into an urban outdoor theatre, the fire may be dispensed with for obvious reasons.

A floodlighted American flag at the front of the amphitheatre is desirable. It provides a focus for flag ceremonies and the singing of patriotic songs. In a true circular arrangement, the flagpole may be within the center ring as a companion piece to the fire pit; or it may be set against a pleasing background outside the circle, where it may be faced by all present. All displays of the flag should conform scrupulously with the customs and courtesies relating to the National Emblem.

When projection is used, direct signaling between speaker and projectionist with a pencil flashlight, the click of a "cricket," snapping of fingers, or tapping the floor or speaker's stand is annoying to the audience. Some speakers have acquired skill in quick spot signals with a flashlight beam on a corner of the screen, so deftly done that it is scarcely noticed by anyone other than the projectionist.

Standard equipment for either built-in or portable projection signal systems is on the market. Park Naturalist C. Kenny Dale of National Capital Parks has developed an excellent compact lightweight flashing light signal with approximately 100 feet of control cord and a 10-foot power cord, yet it is small enough to be carried in a handbag when traveling. The total cost of readily available materials is less than \$7.50. As a general practice, unless the speaker does his own projection, a signal system should be provided. It adds greatly to the smoothness of a slide-illustrated talk. The signal may be visual or audible, or both. Flashing light signals at the projection position should be faint, and shielded or directed to be visible only to the projectionist. Sound signals operated by power or battery can be transmitted through a single earphone, leaving the projectionist an ear free to



TROUBLE WITH EQUIPMENT

hear the speaker. Some projectionists prefer this to visual signals. They can concentrate upon the screen, correcting focus and picture position as necessary, without the possibility of missing a light flash. Plans and lists of materials for inexpensive signal systems are planned as supplemental sheets for the National Park Service *Manual for Information and Interpretation in the Field*.

So, take and use thy work:

Amend what flaws may lurk.

--Robert Browning

One final remark concerning physical factors and facilities. You may have inherited a plant that leaves much to be desired, but it is there and you must use it. Whatever you have inherited, make every effort at good maintenance and housekeeping.

If you are planning or developing, you must deal with existing site possibilities, availability of funds, and construction costs. You must contribute your part to the work of the landscape architect and architect in cutting the best possible product from your cloth. You can do this only by combining good horse sense, diligent study of what has been developed and proven elsewhere, and careful attention to details that contribute to the attractiveness, durability, comfort, and efficient use of the facility.

Whatever the situation, do everything possible through approved procedures to correct deficiencies and to effect improvements in the physical plant; but never forget that a campfire program is an intellectual and spiritual process. Do not be discouraged or lose spirit because your facility does not match your fondest dream. Remember, beautiful as is the stateliest cathedral, a lot of

souls have been saved in simple country brush arbors. Which brings us to the program itself, the only reason for bothering about such things as traditions, philosophy, settings, and the *what* and *how* of facilities.

CHAPTER V CONDUCTING THE PROGRAM

The planned and orderly development of the earth and all it contains is indispensable to the permanent prosperity of the human race.

--Theodore Roosevelt

Planned and orderly development is indispensable to the success of the campfire program.

There is a distinct difference between informality and lack of organization. Unplanned programs can become very complex for the leader and confusing to the audience. If you want to do a good job of running a smooth, informal program, you have to do a lot of advance thinking about program content and presentation techniques. Make each part of the program contribute something definite to the whole. Plan your transitions and tie-ins between items so clearly that everything relates and contributes to the purpose of the program. Arrange the order and nature of the events of the evening to move smoothly and logically toward a planned climax or conclusion. Here are examples of things you will answer for yourself in the process of planning, once the feature subject and the overall purpose of the program have been determined.

Is something needed to employ constructively the time of the early arrivals?

Are you going to open with a flag ceremony, a firelighting, a rousing song, a simple friendly greeting, tell a lively story in the tradition of the region, or present a challenging question to start your audience thinking in the vein of the objective of the evening?

Shall you have community singing? If so, is the purpose to promote fun and fellowship or to set a mood for the message you have to bring, or both? What songs will best serve these purposes?

Are there announcements important to the enjoyment of other interpretive services, the safety of the people, or the protection of the area? When should they be given and how can they best be related or tied in to something on the program?

How can you best start the feature talk? How shall the program be brought to an effective close?

Then, you must think of timing and physical arrangements. What time will the program open, and by all means, *when* will it close? When will you need to arrive to lay the fire and have water ready to extinguish it; to check the lighting system; to set up and adjust your projection equipment ready to use; and to make sure that any "props" are ready for use; and to see that the campfire circle is in neat order with everything ready to go before the people arrive.

Some of these things will be discussed as we review in the usual sequence the preprogram period, the parts of the program proper, and postprogram activities. We have referred to "usual sequence" without implying that there is a preferred rigid order in which a program should be given. Occasional variation of the format may be desirable. For instance, if a talk on a historical theme is intended to arouse a deep sense of patriotic appreciation, the program might reach a fitting climax as you lead the group in singing the National Anthem, or *America*, with all lights out except a spotlight on the flag, or with a projected color motion picture of a waving flag. A talk designed

to create appreciation of the esthetic and inspirational values of the land might close with *America the Beautiful* sung by the group as representative scenes described in the lyrics are projected upon the screen. As another example, a fire control or mountaineering demonstration might be the feature of the evening, followed by a well-told experience story as a dramatic climax to close the program.

Usually, there are two basic phases of the campfire program proper. They are the *introductory period* of "socializing" or group participation activities, and the *program feature*--usually a talk or demonstration. In addition, there may be planned *preprogram* and *postprogram* activities, procedures, or contact opportunities, which are optional in participation by those who come for the program proper.

The Preprogram Period

*Empires dissolve and people disappear:
Song passes not away*

--William Watson

Music is widely used in two ways in connection with campfire programs. Most common is community singing, which will be discussed later. The other is the musical prelude. This probably is best used as unobtrusive background music while the people are gathering for the program. In this way, it does not restrict the freedom of conversation among those so inclined.

Do not use just anything to provide a noisy musical bridge over the interval between the supper dishes and darkness suitable for projection. Silence may be far better than music that has been used without thought for its effect. If you are

going to use prelude music, try to select it to fit the theme of the program, or to provide a restful, relaxed effect upon the listener. If it does either of these things, it will make a definite contribution to the program that follows.

There are special situations, such as Camp 14 in Yosemite and the Sylvan Theatre program in National Capital Parks, where the musical prelude is formalized as a recorded concert or choral recital.

These seem to work out fairly smoothly, but you should be aware of potential problems in trying to present such preprogram music as a "double header" rather than as simple, unscheduled background music.

Music lovers who come for a scheduled concert have just cause to be annoyed by otherwise perfectly normal people with things to talk about, a low music appreciation quotient, or both, who intrude upon the music. The possibility of bickering and unpleasantness among those with conflicting interests under these circumstances cannot be ignored. If it occurs, it does no good to the atmosphere of relaxation and fellowship you are seeking to achieve.

Such friction usually is the result of fuzzy publicity concerning the nature of the musical prelude and its relation to the major event of the evening. Announcements might well be in such a vein as this:

"Beginning at 8 p.m., a half-hour of appropriate recorded music will be played at the amphitheatre while the audience assembles for the campfire program. You are invited to arrive early and follow the



PRE-PROGRAM

music, or enjoy its pleasant atmosphere, while visiting with your friends during the preprogram interval. The regular campfire program begins at 8:30 p.m."

This leaves no one ground for expecting the silence of the concert hall. At the same time, it is an invitation to listening by those who do not come specifically for the music, without denying them the privilege of unchallenged conversation with their companions. The music must be compatible with this freewheeling atmosphere. If there is a place for it as a sponsored program, stately and serious suites or concertos probably belong in a full evening program devoted entirely to concert music under other sponsorship. When the music is over the heads of a substantial part of it, the audience falls apart. Improving the public taste in music is a laudable objective, but campfire programs are not schools of music appreciation. When music comes into this setting, in most cases, it should be on the common cultural base level. The burden of proof in exceeding it greatly lies with the person responsible for program planning, and any bitter fruits are his own harvest.

Definite steps can be taken to add to the orderliness of the group as they assemble during a musical prelude. For example, if the number of personnel assigned to the campfire program and the physical arrangements make it possible, station a man in uniform out of earshot of the audience on the principal approach. He can spot noisy groups as they approach and casually engage them in quiet conversation leading up to a tactful suggestion that at the first break in the music they probably will have the least trouble getting quickly and quietly into the best available seats by entering from the rear down the center aisle, etc.

But kindly man moving among his kind.

--Tennyson

Where no other formal provision such as recorded music is provided, the preprogram period can be devoted profitably to promoting informal social interchange among people while they gather for the evening program. Personnel assigned to the program can serve a useful purpose by roving among the audience and along the approaches, as stimuli to conversation and sources of information for the visitors. Then, of course, there is nothing wrong with just letting the people gather at their convenience and in their own way, with your first planned effort in their behalf coming when you call the group to order to open the program.

Opening the Program

*The thesis which thy words intend--
That to begin implies to end.*

--Tennyson

You should have a clear point of beginning of the planned program of the evening. This is when you call the program to order and turn the crowd into a group with a purpose. Your opening remarks usually are in the form of a welcome, ordinarily identifying the program with the National Park Service and the United States Department of the Interior. This should not degenerate into a stereotyped, nightly parroting of a "commercial." Sponsor identification can be varied, may be given anywhere in the course of the program wherever it can be made logical, lively, and of interest.

Regardless of the exact way in which you open the program, there is one thing you as the leader must firmly establish and maintain throughout--

COMPETITION!!!



control of the entire proceedings. You must be alert to disturbances and intrusions, and move quickly, calmly, and decisively, but with tact, to meet every situation. A program out of hand is a program lost. We shall digress from the matter of opening the program to elaborate briefly upon control.

If a second man is assigned at a program, except when he is otherwise occupied, as when operating the projector during an illustrated talk, he can cover any audience trouble spot, so that the leader may continue with the least possible disruption of the proceedings.

Where parts on the program are presented by others, bear your position of host with dignity and geniality, but retain your control over what the guest presents. Control is not, of course, a matter of iron discipline. You would have to be a humorless soul to attempt to suppress laughter, or diversion of the audience by some amusing spontaneous happening in the course of the program. Ride with such things and exercise your leadership by joining in the spirit of the group. You will be more successful leading it back into the planned course by deflection, than by head-on force.

Do not let the fixed program become a sacred cow, lest it end up a dead one. If a deer or a bear walks into view, you may be sure it will take precedence with the audience over anything else you may have in mind. So break off whatever you are presenting and improvise with information concerning the animal's interesting habits, ecological relationships, or physical characteristics. You will thus identify yourself as the leader-interpreter just as if you has invited the animal. You will be a better figure in this role than as a bewildered,

frustrated schedule worshiper. Maybe your talk about it will send the animal on its way quickly. Usually it won't linger long, whatever you say about it. Then, if it does not unduly prolong the program, work your way back from wildlife to whatever you were discussing, if it is not dispensable. If the interruption cuts time short, drop from the program something which is least essential. Good planning will provide for such priority decisions. It is better to have a fresh audience for the later and climax stage of the program than to arrive at that point with the group fatigued, however faithfully you have given them the full works as scheduled.

During the opening moments of the program, it is desirable to stir up interest in the subject on purpose with a brief anecdote, quotation, poem, challenging statement or question, or other device to stimulate thinking and receptivity in the desired direction. Especially if the feature talk is to be given by another person, experienced campfire leaders occasionally devote the entire introductory period to an informal discussion of some visitor question or experience encountered, ostensibly at least, in the preprogram period. The content of such a discourse usually is designed to correct a common misconception, to fill in information "blind spots," or to lead the people from some existing pattern of thinking into one relating to or preparatory for the subject of the evening.

One evening following an afternoon storm, at the informal campfire in Toulumne Meadows in Yosemite National Park, a ranger naturalist with a flair for reading presents a beautifully expressive poetic description of an afternoon shower. Those around the fire sit spellbound, thrilled to find words for their own experience of a few hours earlier. With



ANECDOTES, READINGS, AND REVIEWS

that, the program concerning the resources and benefits of the high country is off to certain success.

If you have a reasonable facsimile of Charles Loughton's talent for dramatic reading, you will find this type of presentation a wonderful way of getting people to think and feel in the vein of your subject. According to the situation, you can use excerpts from great nature and conservation writings; stirring patriotic messages; great and moving documents of statesmanship; expressive passages from books on national parks such as those by Tilden, Butcher, James, or Mills; or, in the narrative or lighter vein, incidents from *Steve Mather of the National Parks* or *Oh! Ranger*.

If you read aloud well, whether or not you have a talent for highly dramatic style, you can use the same type of material in the form of "book reviews." Discuss and read salient passages from good books on such things as nature study, conservation, historical or patriotic themes, or philosophy of park and wilderness preservation. Should the book, or books, discussed be available through a cooperating association or concessioner, make this known clearly, but inoffensively, in your discussion.

Readings or book reviews are not limited in their usefulness to the establishment of theme in the opening moments of the program. They may be fitted into any appropriate place in the introductory period. A talk may end with a reading which provides an aptly worded climax. On occasions, you may want to use the entire period normally used for the feature talk for a series of readings which combine to get over an important subject or sentiment.

If you completely lack talent for reading aloud, you do more harm than good by stumbling through a reading and should not include it in the program. Here is a place where a talented guest can be used to good advantage on a program.

No spectacle is nobler than a blaze.

--Samuel Johnson

Some campfire program leaders prefer to have a going fire well in advance of program time. The sight of the campfire and people gathering may attract campers or passersby who were unaware of the program. Other leaders like to use the lighting of the fire, with or without ceremony, as the opening event of the scheduled program.

If the feature of the program is an illustrated talk, it is well to time the starting of the fire, and to control the fuel supply, to reduce the fire to glowing embers by the time projection begins. A bright blaze may cast disturbing reflections on the projection screen, or serve as a distraction. Where an unillustrated talk is built to a vigorous climax or to one of contemplation and reverie, the manipulation of the fire up or down can strongly complement the effect sought. Most programs in the National Park System will end on a quiet key with which the dwindling fire or dying embers perfectly harmonize.

Kneel always when you light a fire!

Kneel reverently and thankful be.

--John Oxenham

At an occasional campfire program in the parks, especially where it is compatible with the feature subject, you may add a wilderness flavor and heighten interest with a ceremonial firelighting.

Ordinarily you will accompany your firebuilding with a story of the association of primitive man, or of the American Indian with fire. Your emphasis may be upon how he made it and how he used it.

Possibly you will stage a demonstration of flint and steel firemaking or fire-by-friction. The latter method is especially dramatic. It also can be related to the natural resources of your region which were used in fire building by the aborigines. But by all means--if necessary, and by the grace of the petroleum industry--make sure that a fire results from your efforts. You also should have a graceful alibi for failure of your primitive methods to work.

It is unnecessary here to give details on firelighting procedures and ceremonies. There are excellent sources of ideas and techniques which should be in the library of every agency sponsoring campfire programs.

Woodcraft, Bernard S. Mason, A. S. Barnes Co., \$5.00, and *Council Fires*, Ellsworth Jaeger, Macmillan Co., \$2.95, each is filled with lore, ceremonials, and practical procedures, has many ideas adaptable to almost every conceivable type of campfire program, and has an excellent bibliography.

The Boy Scout camping merit badge pamphlet, which sells for 25¢, has useful information on firebuilding and fuels. It is widely available through local authorized Boy Scout equipment agencies.

The Introductory Period

*Make the coming hour o'erflow with joy,
and pleasure drown the brim.*

Shakespeare

After the opening comes the introductory portion, devoted to "socializing" functions of the program. This may vary greatly in content and length. Perhaps the most widely employed introductory activity is community singing. Stories or readings with outdoor or regional flavor, question-and-answer periods, quizzes and games, stunts, interviews, panels, and demonstrations are other devices often used.

*....we'll sing another song--
Sing it with a spirit that will
start the world along.*

--Henry Clay Work

Community singing is a fine way of establishing informality and good fellowship, but leadership is the key to really successful group singing. If you lack talent or interest, it is better to use other forms of "socializing" activity for your campfire programs.

To lead group singing requires experience, but it is not difficult to come by. A good singing voice is a help, but is not by any means an absolute requirement. Of more importance is an enthusiastic manner, self-confidence, and a feeling of familiarity with the activity. These are products of experience.

The leader's important functions are to set a proper pitch, to establish and maintain a rhythm



SINGING

appropriate to the song, and to present the song in a manner which will encourage participation.

For out-of-doors singing, most leaders find it desirable to pitch the song somewhat lower than usually written in popular song books. This may be difficult when volunteer accompanying instrumental music is used. Most musicians will play, either from memory or from music, in a standard key; not all are able to transpose to the lower key most suitable for out-of-doors singing.

The sing leader is just what the word says--a leader. He starts the song and maintains the rhythm, usually by beating time. This should be done strongly and in a manner obvious to all. The best way to learn this is to practice beating out the standard 2, 3, and 4 beat rhythms. These are not difficult and can be accommodated to any song likely to be used around a campfire.

A very common difficulty in community singing is the tendency to sing too slowly, or to drag the tempo. As a general rule, start the song at a somewhat faster tempo than you, in your state of excitement as leader, think is proper, and then *maintain that tempo*. When the song drags, it is usually because the leader is following the singers--matching his beat to their decelerating tempo. If you beat time strongly, and very slightly anticipate the singers in your beat, this tendency to drag can be overcome.

The leader himself does not have to sing the entire song. He must start the song in order to set the key and as an encouragement to audience participation. If he then stops singing, he can give more attention to the matter of directing the song, and his voice will be even more effective

when, from time to time, he joins in again briefly to start a less familiar verse or phrase, or to whip up the tempo.

In smaller groups, particularly in campgrounds, it is often possible to find a talented song leader, who, for a particular occasion or throughout his stay in the park, will supplement or replace the less effective talent of the regular staff. Extreme care and tact are required in using such leaders to assure that desirable standards of propriety for these programs are observed.

Many song leaders consider that instrumental music detracts from the desirable informality of a *capella singing* usually associated with the campfire. The high initial investment and the difficulty of maintaining a piano in good tune in the ordinary campfire program situation definitely argue against its use in most places.

The campfire program is no place to try to teach groups to sing new or unfamiliar tunes. Old favorite songs, popular current numbers, or parodies of them are most satisfactory. People enjoy doing what they can do well. Simple stunt, or participation, songs are ordinarily well received, especially those that use well-known tunes.

Such things as background stories on the numbers sung, quizzes on music titles or brief musical passages, and group humming or whistling of choruses or stanzas, will heighten interest and provide variety in the program. However, keep them very brief.

Another opportunity for audience participation during the song period occurs when groups such as hiking or mountaineering clubs, Boy Scouts, Camp

Fire Girls, or 4-H Clubs are in the audience. Most such groups sing with great spirit, usually to the delight of the audience. These groups can be spotted and judged by their participation in the first number or two of the evening's program. Unless there is apparent certainty of the results, it is best not to issue an impromptu invitation. As a general practice, it is better to get in touch with the leader of such groups in advance and have a clear understanding of *what* they are to sing, and for how long. As in all phases of the program, maintain control of the situation and tactfully steer away from repeated audience encores which may lead into things you may wish had never happened.

From the National Recreation Association, 315 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York, you can obtain *Community Songs* and *Action Songs*, two excellent group singing source books.

An authoritative work on recreational music which will be helpful to anyone having song leadership responsibilities is:

Community and Assembly Singing, A. D. Zanzig, M. Witmark & Sons, 60¢.

Projected song slides increase participation and lighten the burden of the song leader. Since most of the tunes used are familiar, or simple ones easily picked up, there is no need to include the musical score in the slide.

Photographic song slides may be produced by a number of processes. The booklet entitled *Slides* in the *Kodak Data Book* series, available at camera stores for 35¢, gives complete instructions for some of these methods. White-on-black lettering is generally preferable, to eliminate screen glare.

For 2 x 2 slides it is best to use not more than six, or at most eight lines of copy. If the song is longer, prepare two or more slides, and project in succession. In most cases, where a chorus is repeated in a several-verse song, each verse should be on a separate slide. Only one chorus slide is needed. It can be placed in the projector slide carriage in ready position while the first verse is being projected, and can remain in the carriage until its final projection after the last verse. The verse slides are changed each time the chorus slide is in projection position.

Copyright restrictions on music are extremely rigid and penalties severe. Fortunately, most of the old favorites used in group singing are in the public domain. Before making copy slides of the lyrics of any song, make sure it is not under current copyright. For the purposes of making slides for group singing in a public park at free admission affairs, most publishers will give consent upon request.

Song motion pictures are far more expensive than slides, but they have had some use in outdoor community singing. They *do* carry a tune on key. Usually, they have pleasing voice or instrumental music which is easy to follow. In these respects, song films can be a real aid to less able song leaders. Outdoor audiences enjoy them and will join in singing far better than they do in a downtown theatre. This is particularly true since a leader is present in person to encourage them to do so. But song films are still mechanical and, as such, are to a degree out of keeping with the campfire atmosphere. They share the tendency of outdoor song leaders to pitch the key too high. The leader can enliven their use by enthusiastic introductions, by giving the beat, and by interjected remarks.

The *Educational Film Guide*, and supplements, published by H. W. Wilson Company, 950 University Avenue, New York 52, New York, contains a number of listings of song films. (This catalog is the "Bible" for locating titles and sources of many types of films which are useful in various training, educational, and public relations functions of park and recreation agencies.)

*The time has come, the walrus said, to speak
of many things.*

--Lewis Carroll

The conversation, or interview, is another effective introductory feature for the campfire program. An "old timer," such as an old settler or pioneer resident of the region, or a person who visited the park at some early stage of its existence, who has a talent for telling a story, may be used for this type of presentation. Careful advance discussion and preparation may help to avoid rambling discourses on trivialities and uninteresting personal memoirs by the guest. Another matter of concern in handling some "old timers" is finding a terminal facility.

A noted historian, entomologist, forester, world traveler, conservationist, or a prominent public official who has an interest in park matters and talent for public speaking may be present in the area and willing to participate in a brief discussion of something compatible with the subject matter of the evening or of general interest to the campfire audience.

There are many opportunities for interesting and timely interviews between the campfire leader and other local park officials.

The Superintendent might be interviewed on such matters as general policy and administrative problems of the Service. The Chief Ranger might discuss the general protection of the area and the visiting public; an acute current fire hazard and the necessity for public cooperation during the emergency period; or matters such as back country good manners or safe driving, hiking and climbing practices.

One of the rangers could be interviewed on some recent widely publicized event. For example, if there has been a rescue of a stranded climber or a fatal climbing accident, a conversation with one of the rangers or other persons in the rescue party might bring out tactfully both the great pleasure in mountain climbing and the tragic results of improper equipment and carelessness or foolhardiness.

If he is present, it is entertaining and informative to interview the leader of a conducted trip scheduled for the following day. This is far more effective than a mere announcement of the event by the master of ceremonies. Of course, it would be an unjustified expense to assign the leader to attend the campfire for this purpose alone. A similar stimulus to trail use or back-country travel could be provided by inviting someone who has made an interesting climb, or has traveled to a seldom visited area to describe a recent experience.

*You start a question, and it's like starting
a stone. You sit quietly on top of a hill;
and away the stone goes, starting others.*

--Robert L. Stevenson

Effective question and answer sessions require considerable skill on the part of the campfire leader. It is not a case of merely asking "Does

anyone have any questions?" The more experienced man has considerable knowledge of the kinds of things people want to know about the park and from this knowledge is able by some comment or provoking statement to invite further inquiries on the part of the audience.

A question box in museums or public contact stations into which visitors may drop written questions to be answered at the campfire program can serve the dual purpose of supplying advance material for the question period, and increasing interest in the campfire program.

By circulating among the group while the audience is assembling, the leader may receive questions and eavesdrop on conversations to pick up ideas for brief impromptu discussions and questions. Challenging or stimulating questions usually will elicit answers or further questions from the audience, such as "No, why?", to which the leader can supply the answer.

A specific query directed to the audience is a good way of soliciting contributed information or viewpoints from some of those present. For instance, you might mention an inquiry received earlier in the evening concerning a trip to Matilda Ann Lake. State that you have not visited the lake this year. then ask: "Is there anyone present who has been there this year, who can inform us about the condition of the section of trail over the steep ledges?" If there is a response, follow through with a few rapid-fire questions, such as whether the avalanche lilies are in flower, whether any interesting wild-life was seen, or whether the lake is completely free of ice. It may surprise you how many people will make this hike following such an indirect invitation.

Be sure everyone hears questions or comments from the audience. If there is any doubt in your mind, repeat or paraphrase clearly what has been said. The same is true for discussions or interviews with invited guests.

To sustain interest, and to draw more audience contributions, always keep the pace of the question session rapid. Answers to questions, and spur-of-the-moment tidbit topics presented by the leader should never be allowed to run into monologue length, however, the use of brief monologues on a timely topic is a perfectly good practice. As much as 5 to 10 minutes can be used for such a discussion during the introductory period without intruding upon the feature talk of the evening.

When the person who is to give the feature talk also acts as master of ceremonies during the introductory period, he should confine each of his preliminary spoken contributions to the shortest possible length. The very best voice has an audience fatigue point. This argues for separate individuals for master of ceremonies and feature speaker, especially in larger campfire circles and amphitheatres. With a small audience monotony of the leader's voice is somewhat reduced by devoting a percentage of time to visitor participation, and by maintaining a conversational rather than lecture atmosphere.

Quizzes and games are appropriate and much enjoyed introductory activities in campfire programs, especially in campgrounds, or with special groups for whom programs are provided. Such quizz techniques as "20 Questions," "What's My Line?," and "Who Am I?," can be adapted to the subject matter of the area and provide at once wholesome entertainment, information, and enthusiastic audience

participation. In campfires for special groups, or in small-group activities which include a campfire, a game involving knowledge or simple skills is an interesting campfire activity. Leaf matching, nature "spell downs," wildlife charades, and historic personality "Who Am I's" are examples of this type of activity.

While these kinds of activities are spontaneous "fun" for the people, remember that for you as the leader, they are planned functions, requiring careful preparation, implicit attention to detail in their conduct, and highly animated leadership to give them life. Avoid things which require time consuming instructions or preparations. Do not let things drag out until the interest lags. Move them off with dispatch and bring them to an end with everyone still interested enough to enter the next activity with high enthusiasm.

Several references listed below, and others in bibliographies they contain, are excellent sources for ideas and directions for worthwhile and enjoyable campfire program activities.

Book of Games, G. S. Ripley, Association Press \$3.00

Fun Book, M. S. G. LaRue, Macmillan, \$1.75

Campfire and Council Ring Programs, Allan A. Macfarlan, Associated Press \$2.50

Campfire Tonight, Richard J. Hurley, Peak Press \$1.00

Quiz and Game Book, J. King, Garden City Publishing Co., \$1.00



FIRE DEMONSTRATION

*It teaches us to do, as well as to talk;
and to make our actions and words all of
a color.*

--Seneca

The special demonstration makes an interesting program item.

In some of the national parks, members of the ranger staff present demonstrations from time to time at campfire programs. As short introductory program items, such demonstrations usually cover single aspects of ranger work. Worthwhile questions from the audience are invariably forthcoming, the answers to which complement the demonstration. For example, during prevailing high fire danger, the necessity for caution by visitors and the effects of fire upon park resources and values might be dramatized through a 5-minute interpretive demonstration of fire weather station procedures. Interesting brief messages concerning the pleasures and hazards of mountain climbing can be developed around the demonstration of climbing or mountain rescue equipment. Usually, in the feature talk that follows, you will find logical opportunities to refer further to things seen or discussed during the ranger's demonstration.

In several areas, a group of rangers periodically present a comprehensive demonstration of the work of the park rangers as the feature program. It has become one of the most popular campfire programs in the repertoire. The rangers consider it a justifiable investment of time in preventive protection, through interpretation. They do a splendid job of "selling" the public on the importance of their work. Further, they enjoy doing it. Many of them even do so on contributed overtime when other work demands make this necessary.

Such a feature program may open with a brief talk about ranger qualifications, recruitment, and training, and the organization of the ranger force. This talk often is given by the Chief Ranger. This may be followed by a demonstration of safety and rescue equipment and techniques. Next, there may be a brief illustrated talk on winter functions and back-country operations of the ranger staff. Then, with the use of a docile pack horse, one of the rangers may demonstrate various packing equipment and techniques, often with a little "horseplay" mixed in. A simulated fire detection and dispatching enactment may follow, employing radio actually in communication with a fire lookout, the dispatcher's office, and other field stations as circumstances make possible. The program may end with a demonstration of fire fighting equipment, perhaps with a dramatic finale, such as suppression of a controlled fire or display of portable pumps, or a pumper truck, using good showmanship by floodlighting different types of nozzle streams.

*Beware of Greeks bearing gifts,
--paraphrase of Vergil*

Amateur talent on campfire programs should be handled with caution, or omitted altogether. It is possible for the program to degenerate into an "outdoor amateur hour" which offers little beyond the commonplace in entertainment, and which may be incompatible with campfire program objectives.

Atmosphere music, stories with an outdoor, historical, or folklore flavor, relating to personal experiences, and demonstrations of outdoor or camping skills are desirable types of amateur performance for campfire programs. Clog dancing, acrobatic acts, and skits, the propriety of which is difficult to predict or control, generally are to be avoided on National Park Service campfire programs.



Clever or instructive stunts can be used occasionally, but only occasionally, in the introductory period. If you are imaginative and resourceful, you may want to prepare scripts for simple stunts based upon such things as past or recent actual happenings and amusing fancied experiences in the park. Groups such as visiting Boy Scout troops, hiking clubs, and perennial "camp neighbors" may have entertaining stunts of their own, or might enact program ideas furnished by you.

In campgrounds, usually there are some evenings when the activity at the campfire circle is entirely in the hands of the campers. These occasions are outlets for camper talent which may or may not be suitable for use in officially sponsored public programs. You may be able to make unannounced use of such informal gatherings as "talent trials," from which something worthwhile may turn up for use on sponsored programs where amateur talent is considered desirable.

In all cases, as campfire program director, you should exercise keen judgment in selecting material and in allotting time to entertainment features. This is essential to proper program balance, and to avoid disruption of the schedule and discordant program numbers. Remember, it is better to seek your talent than to accept what comes too easily. The extrovert who eagerly volunteers his talent should be looked over twice. This type of performer, with an assist from the audience, can easily get out of hand. As in all phases of the program, you must retain control by careful understanding with the voluntary performer as to the part he is to play.

No tale so good but may be spoiled in the telling.

--W. G. Benham

You can quite successfully enter into the spirit of wholesome fun during community singing, or while presenting tall stories, homespun tales, quizzes, games, or stunts, and still retain control, as long as you use good sense and good timing. Neither drag things out nor drag them down. There is no place for improprieties or the risque by you or anyone else on the program, either in music or other efforts at being funny, informal, or entertaining. A humorous song, "wise crack," or joke may fall flat, but as long as it is decent and in good taste it usually evokes no resentment. Naturalness is one of your most priceless possessions. Do not trade it lightly for a "mess of second hand corn." What fits on another may look mighty bad on you. Do not mimic others. Find your own style of humor and stick to it. If you have no talent or stomach for humor, then stay serious in the most pleasant possible way, and you will get over far better than to drag in a stereotyped joke by the heels, or to smother a relaxed joke with stiffness. While it helps, people don't just *have* to laugh their way through an evening to have an enjoyable time.

Announcements should be held to a minimum essential to proper publicity of program activities, and instructions in such matters as lost and found items and urgent protection and safety messages. These are usually presented during the introductory period of the program. It usually is the objective of the feature talk to lead the audience to an emotional climax or an impulse to do something about the matter discussed. It is therefore undesirable to create an anticlimax with announcements and

admonitions at the close of the program. However, if you are resourceful, you can spread your announcements through the program, tying them in with the things being presented, even in the song period. For instance, if, in the course of a geology talk, you are discussing the volcanic character of Specimen Mountain, the most effective time to announce a hike to this volcanic peak scheduled for the following morning would be at that point.

If there are announcements which cannot be tied logically into some part of the program, disperse them between the units of the program. Now and then, you may want to use a 2-to-5 minute illustrated announcement period. Use slides of such things as places to be visited or of people doing things offered on the next day's schedule. A projected picture of an attractive forest, followed by a fire scene and that by one of a fire-devastated area may give dramatic impact to your words of caution about prevailing high fire danger. "Before-and-after" scenes of a littered roadside camp or picnic site would point up, as no words alone could do, your plea for public cooperation in maintaining a cleaner and more enjoyable park.

Each time you finish the introductory period of a campfire program, ask yourself such questions as these: What was this all about? Has the spirit of the group been lifted? Have the people shown a community of interest and good fellowship? Have I laid a good groundwork of basic thinking or information about the subject of the feature talk? Is the audience prepared emotionally for the talk? Have I reached the psychologically right time to introduce the speaker? If you can answer affirmatively, you probably have done a pretty good job as a campfire program leader. You will never be so good you cannot improve through self-examination and constant striving for better results.

The Major Program Feature

A good talker, even more than a good orator, implies a good audience.

--Leslie Stephen

In a small, informal, conducted program such as those in many campgrounds, the skillful direction of discussion, conversation, and other activities may be such that the entire evening flows without perceptible distinction between introductory and feature portions of the program. With larger audiences, a definite period of 20 to 45 minutes usually is devoted to a well-defined feature talk or demonstration. The talk may be unillustrated, or accompanied by slides or motion pictures.

Because things seen are mightier than things heard.

--Tennyson

There has been a trend in recent years, particularly with larger audiences to rely entirely upon illustrated rather than straight oral presentation. It is a common fallacy to think that "the pictures carry the story." Whether you present a talk with or without illustrations, very definite considerations of organization apply. These are discussed thoroughly in *Talks*, the first of this series of National Park Service in-service interpretive training booklets.

One important point made in *Talks* bears repeating here. The talk must possess narrative quality, cohesiveness, well-established suspense and climax, and completeness. A really good illustrated talk would be interesting and make good sense if heard or read without illustrations. The pictures should illustrate the talk, rather than the talk

being a series of captions for the pictures. A talk of the latter sort may draw voluminous "oohs" and "ahs" from the audience, but in the end fall short of your responsibility to present a meaningful story in an effective manner.

A lively oral presentation, done with enthusiasm born of consuming interest and personal experience of the speaker, can be as attractive and interesting to an audience as the best illustrated talk or motion picture. This is the original form of national park campfire talk, from which the whole modern program has evolved. It must never become a lost art. By presenting such a talk, you may give the average visitor something he will never have the opportunity of enjoying elsewhere.

The method may depend to considerable degree on the subject treated. If you are presenting a talk which is basically subject matter, mere word pictures of animals or flowers or trees, for instance, would be a poor substitute for high quality slides or movies tied in with your discussion. On the other hand, if the talk is devoted to a story of experience or adventure, to the discussion of a problem, or to influencing concepts and attitudes, illustrations may, in some instances, detract from, rather than add to the effectiveness of communication.

A panel discussion of a timely conservation topic, or some problem of interest relating to the management or visitor use of the park can be an excellent feature campfire program. Only 3 or 4 persons should be on the panel, and each should be limited to no more than 10 minutes of initial presentation. A brief period of interchange of opinions among panel participants may follow. These first 2 steps should establish basic understandings



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and provoke unresolved questions on the part of the audience, for answer by members of the panel. Issues in which serious controversial involvements might arise to put the guest speakers in embarrassing situations should be avoided in campfire programs, where the desirable emotional temperature is warm, rather than hot.

Demonstrations of park functions as feature programs have been discussed in connection with the introductory portion of the program. In an area where such activities as camping, fishing, boating, or mountaineering are widely engaged in, it may be desirable at intervals to stage full-length demonstrations relating to them.

For instance, visiting experts among park visitors, or qualified people from the region, might be invited to demonstrate casting techniques, baits, equipment, or other aspects of fishing, to help others improve their skills and aptitudes in this sport. Such a presentation might include slide or movie illustrations of such things as attractive scenes and maps of park waters, and kinds of fish present in various waters, typical habitats of different species; or of skills, such as the tying of flies and knot tying, which require the magnification provided by projection to be seen by a large audience.

A whole program might consist of a demonstration of skills and equipment for camping. This may perhaps be accompanied by slides or movies of things that cannot readily be shown at the campfire program, such as suitable sites for various types of camps and good camp sanitation. Such a program can add to the quality of use by campers in the audience and stimulate new interest in camping on the part of others. In general, however, such special

interest demonstrations make better short introductory period presentations. They have casual interest for anyone, but may tend to narrow the audience appeal, and the attendance, if made the principal subject of the program.

There are times and places where the use of a professional-type sound motion picture may be a satisfactory feature for a campfire program. This is particularly true if the film has an especially timely conservation message or is an especially good treatment of a pertinent historical or natural history subject. As a general practice, however, the use of a sound film for the major campfire program feature is not recommended. When so used, it should not be brought on "cold," unless the film was specifically produced for the place and occasion. An oral introduction to "set the stage" by relating the film to the area and visitor interests is important. In some cases, there may be minor errors, inconsistencies, or limitations in the film which require advance attention. Alert the audience for certain key scenes or passages in the film. Few films can be effectively used in the park campfire program without such an introduction. Work *with* the film, rather than using it to avoid work.

You might use a 10-minute fire protection or conservation sound film or one on a subject or current interest in the park from time to time during the introductory period. So limited in length, it will not intrude upon the personally delivered feature talk or demonstration.

A few short subjects such as the Coronet, and the Keidenkamp color films on individual birds, and 10-minute units of film series, such as the Conservation Foundation's "Living Forest," "Living Earth," and "Web of Life," can be incorporated

smoothly into the content of slide-illustrated lectures or otherwise straight oral discussions on the feature program. These are widely available from film libraries.

Closing the Program

*He who put a good finish to his undertaking
is said to have placed a golden crown to the whole.*
--Eustathius

The ideal close is to bring the principal feature of the evening to a logical climax. A subject, such as a talk on geology, might be effectively concluded with a brief, well-coordinated recapitulation of the geological events and their influence upon the present landscape. It is especially impressive to emphasize the vastness of time and the relative insignificance of the span of history. A sense of personal humility and a greater appreciation of the visible landscape should be imparted to the listener from your treatment of this theme. Whatever the subject, your closing summary should flow smoothly out of the last phase of your basic story, and should point up the relationships and the unity of all that you have discussed. Occasionally, but only occasionally, the close of a talk may be tied into a program announcement such as: "Now may I wish you a pleasant night's rest before the hike to Reflection Lake tomorrow, where you will see in their natural settings many of the wild flowers we have discussed tonight." As we have said before, avoid routine "commercials" that divert the audience from the frame of thinking which has been the goal of your talk.

Where the program feature is a "propaganda" talk, such as a discussion of some major problem or philosophy, you should aim at making the visitor

seriously and to take to heart what you have to say. He should be convinced that the problem is his, to the point that he wants to do likewise. While your close can be dramatic, and expressed with perfection, the visitors' reactions at the end of the program should be the normal, natural result of all that you have said and done in the course of the talk, rather than a last minute frenzy of urging, preaching, entreating, or special pleading. The audience must draw its own conclusions, and any overt effort to tell them what to do, what to think, how to feel, may destroy the effect sought. An ideal conclusion will leave the visitor with a sense of self-attained achievement, a respectful mood, or sentiments so profound that any unrelated concluding thought would "break the spell."

*With friends, adventures, campfire dreams
to prize,
and memories of mountains in his eyes.*

--Ethel Romig Fuller

The Postprogram Period

However well developed or concluded, your talk is never the last word. If it is worth its salt, it will arouse questions or stimulate further interest in the minds of many in the audience. Somewhere within your feature talk, make your listeners feel welcome to approach you *after the conclusion of the program*, to satisfy their questions and interests. However, they do not need to be coaxed with last minute reminders. If your presentation has not raised questions or whetted appetite for further help, let it go. Most people will prefer to depart on the high note of the program's close. The speaker must avoid obligating them out of courtesy to remain through a question period that may deal with things in which they have no further special interest.

A small circle of persons usually will gather about the speaker after the program, even without special invitation. Some will merely want to compliment you on your talk. A few will bring or seek lost objects. Once in a while one wants to correct what he considers an error, or to supply a factual deficiency in the talk. Two or three will want to relate experiences recalled by your talk. An occasional one will want to volunteer for something, or to know how one gets a job as a "ranger." And invariably there is an innocently garrulous soul who just hates to see anything end.

In your post program relationships, be courteous and reasonably available to those who stay to talk to you. Create an air of dispatch, to enable you to serve all who are seeking your assistance. You might even consider the saving of firewood, electricity, and your own energy for tomorrow's tasks.

Try definitely to limit such a postsession. You might follow such a procedure as the following: Defer activity other than to receive a found article, or to acknowledge pleasantly those who pass quickly to say something like, "We certainly enjoyed the talk," until those coming forward are assembled around you. Then start with a remark such as, "In order to use the *10 minutes we have available* to best advantage, we might quickly dispose of any lost or found articles and then take up your questions in turn as rapidly as possible, to avoid delaying *you*." Follow up each question with concise answers and quick "Now, who was next?" transitions between questioners. Where inquiries fall into a predictable pattern, it is possible to dispose of them quickly by questions on your part, such as: "Did some of you want the title of the book on mountaineering to which I referred in the



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talk?" "Are there any questions on tomorrow's program of activities?" "Are there questions on road directions which I can answer quickly, so I won't hold you up while answering more involved questions?"

It is easy to be monopolized or unreasonably detained by an "eager beaver." Do everything possible to avoid being drawn into extended individual conversations. Address your replies both to the inquirer and the group, to make it clear that your service is for everyone. As you dispose of each question, quickly focus attention on the next inquirer momentarily, and take up his question, in turn including the group in your reply. The idle, time-consuming type of person will usually stay to the bitter end. You can extricate yourself from his endless toils in the most courteous, but expeditious, possible manner, without neglect or embarrassment of others who stop briefly after the program for legitimate assistance.

Look up thro' night; the world is wide.

--Tennyson

If there is good visibility of the sky from the campfire area, or an open place nearby which is easily and safely reached at night, you may want to conduct star observation as an occasional post-program activity. Such a function usually is announced earlier in the program. Without further fanfare other than perhaps a reminder posted at the exit, it follows a break after the regular campfire program. In this way, those in the audience who are not interested may leave without the embarrassment of walking out on your repeated invitation. Coming so late, a "star-gazing" postlude should be limited to about 15 minutes. If it is much longer, it will attract fewer people and exceed the interest span of most of them.

Regardless of your previous knowledge of astronomy, you can readily develop a fund of information adequate to serve those with an ordinary amateur interest in the night skies. Journals such as *Science News Letter* and *Nature Magazine* carry sky diagrams and discussions of astronomical features of current interest. The Maryland Academy of Science, Enoch Pratt Library, Baltimore, Md., issues an annual *Time Table of the Heavens*, for 20¢. A similar annual, *Observers Handbook*, is issued by the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, David Dunlap Observatory, Toronto, Canada, for 50¢. *Field Book of the Skies*, in the Putnam series of Field Books, is an excellent basic reference which retails at \$3.95. From the Hayden Planetarium, New York 24, New York, one can obtain for 35¢ a simple, but very effective rotating disc star-finding device known as the "Star Explorer."

A good flashlight, with focused beam, is probably the best readily available aid for pointing out the positions of constellations, individual stars, or planets.

As with any program, maintain your schedule for a "star-gazing," and in your planning omit anything that you even suspect may confuse you or your audience, or which may foul up your timing. The simpler it is, the fewer pitfalls you will find in carrying out a program.



THE BETTER LEADER

CHAPTER VI THE BETTER LEADER

*A man in earnest finds means, or if
he cannot find, creates them.*

--W. E. Channing

The future of the campfire program as an institution in your area is influenced each time you lead such a program. You will add to or take away from a noble tradition, according to your performance.

Don't let this grave responsibility overawe you. You are selected to lead campfire programs because you have the personality, intelligence, and talent for this kind of leadership. Approach each meeting as a new adventure in service and enjoyable human relations. Do all that you do in a spirit of sincere helpfulness, good will, and enthusiasm for your work.

Evaluate your programs continuously in the light of the objectives you expect them to serve. Maintain high quality in every phase of the program. Keep yourself and the program fresh and lively. Be ready to experiment with new ideas and activities and equally ready to discard what experience proves unsuitable. Do your best to make each program a highlight experience for everyone in the audience. Let it be a unifying force and a stimulant to the whole program of public services in the park. Most importantly, don't let it go over the head of the audience, fall to earth, or slip into the gutter.

Now, to some practical items that may help make you a better campfire program leader!

Any unwelcome disturbance arising within the audience should be corrected without delay. You may hesitate to take action that might offend anyone, but to remain oblivious to loud talk, noise, or other disturbances produced by a few persons is an offense against the audience as a whole when it interferes with their enjoyment of the program. (Be sure that there *is* something to enjoy and that the restlessness is not of your own making.) This situation does not arise very often, but when it does, prompt action should be taken tactfully, quietly, and preferably by the man who is not "on the stage."

Remember, the interest span of people is "short of forever." Schedule programs within reasonable time limits. A program will seem shorter if it has variety and a change of pace, and especially if the group feels it is being talked *with* rather than *to*.

Sitting is a pleasant pastime, but it can be overdone. Few campfire circles provide luxury seating. If people have come early, and then have sat through a half hour or so of introductory program, you may need to freshen your audience for the *piece de resistance* by inviting them to take a "seventh inning stretch" before you introduce the speaker or launch into your feature talk.

Children can be a problem to you at the campfire program. Anyone who tells you how to handle children is bragging. But, in general, you will have better luck with them if you *include* them and *use* them. They like to feel they are noticed, and that they have a part in things. Society may have been more placid when the adage "children should be seen and not heard" applied. But we do not live in a placid age, so you may as well adapt yourself to the modern slogan "If you can't lick them, join them."

Seriously, if you pitch at least part of what you say for the children, you may keep them interested. And you will find that most adults will also enjoy and understand things spoken for the child. You can get the children on your team by letting them "help" with little odds and ends of preparation. When you can, spend a little time in "kid talk" with them before the program (somehow, they are always early), build up their interest in what is to follow, and guide them into cooperative conduct during the program. Sometimes a volunteer monitor will do well "being responsible for those little kids" during the talk.

Most big troubles are groups of little ones or are little ones blown up with neglect. Do your best to keep cool and collected whatever happens. You can best do this by *forethought* and *preparation*. Know the answers to questions such as these: What do I do if a sudden thunderstorm arises? Suppose the wind blows over the screen? (If you are in windy country, why didn't you make provisions to keep the screen from blowing over?) What will I say if a slide comes on upside down? (Why should such a bobble occur? Were you prepared?)

What if someone faints or has an epileptic spell during the program? How will I handle a drunk and disorderly person? What do I do if the power fails? How will I react if someone in the audience openly challenges something I say? How will I handle a religious fanatic who loudly denounces my use of geological time? What if a child falls in the fire pit? (Were you keeping your eye on the children down front as you should have been?) What will I say to calm things down if some woman screams "mouse"? Much of this sounds silly, but everything mentioned here has happened at a campfire program. It can happen to you.

You are responsible for the comfort and safety of your people as well as for their entertainment and cultural uplift. You must protect and care for the equipment in emergency conditions. You must know that there is firmness, not mushiness in the "soft word that turneth away wrath." Above all, you must be quick and equal to any situation that arises. This all comes of good organization, planning, and teamwork when there are two or more of you assigned to the program. You may resent it if a tourist, confused by your uniform, asks if you are a scoutmaster, but you can take a page from his book; *Be Prepared*.

In many situations you may have to do your own projection while talking. This does not come naturally any more than rubbing your stomach and patting your head at the same time. But it can be done with practice, if you have normal capacity for coordination. Do not get your practice on the job. Go over and over the handling of slides into and out of the projector while talking, so that you can do it almost automatically. Then, you won't subject your audience to the agonizing experience of watching you fumble and struggle to keep your wits about you during the program.

Make your voice as pleasant as possible. The listener may have more of you than he wants in the course of a program if your voice is strained, too weak, overloud, or too high in pitch. If you are a bit excited, or are prone to talk too loudly, it is easy for your voice to reach an unpleasant high pitch. When using a public address system, try to drop the pitch of your voice to offset the higher register of the amplifier. Learn to talk from your diaphragm. It will save wear and tear on your vocal cords. If you have laryngitis, you needn't feel like a "gold brick" to beg off, or to get a

substitute speaker. You will do the audience no favor by inflicting a rasping voice upon them, however brave you seem in "carrying on." You have no more business giving a talk with laryngitis than you do leading a hike with a severely sprained ankle.

If you are going to use stories or tall tales, use the right ones for your personality and for your area. For example, Paul Bunyon yarns are pointless in a desert area. Yellowstone gags sound weird in Shenandoah. Mark Twain's Gold Rush characters are out of character in Acadia. Every part of the country has its folklore and traditional characters. Learn your regional literature if you have a penchant for weaving tales into your programs.

If you ever seek someone to blame for the difficulty of doing a good job with your illustrated campfire talks, pick on Walt Disney and Lowell Thomas. You are living in the age of *Cinerama*, *Beaver Valley*, *Olympic Elk*, *The Living Desert*, and *The Vanishing Prairie*. You have a public that knows good wildlife and scenic photography when it sees them. No longer can you throw together a set of "pretty good" slides and get over with a moderately good discussion of them.

As a first premise, we in the National Park Service must realize we cannot meet these high modern professional standards in photography. We must do the best we can in that direction. What we do have that Disney or *Cinerama* does not have is *you*. You, who are there, with the opportunity to make a living experience of your lecture. Helped by your pictures--yes. But still it is you, telling, from your wealth of knowledge and experience, fascinating things, always growing and changing in interest and expression, something a static

thing like a film, however good, can never be or do. The coming of the nature film era has not sounded the death knell of the campfire program--but merely that of the lazy or so-so campfire leader.

But do not overrate yourself. "Pride goeth before a fall" is old, but still true. It isn't you as *you* that is important, but what you give and what you represent. A nice box may help jewelry sales, but it is the jewelry itself that makes the wearer's pleasure and becomes his prized possession. Never forget that. However popular you become, however much masculine pulchritude and persuasive powers you possess, you are but a vessel for more precious things you bring to people--a love and understanding of nature and of country; a pride in these things that demands their preservation; and new horizons for richer, fuller living.

Approach each campfire as a challenge--a challenge to make this your best program ever, but making it so, to still be humble and able to grow. You can be the better leader.

