

NATURE'S

Grapevine

WASHINGTON CROSSING STATE PARK, NJ

Winter 2020

Resolve to Camp 20/20 Hindsight from a Seasoned Camper

By Ann E. Prince

It's Winter 2020, a new year, a new beginning. A year to start an adventure – alone or with loved ones. A year to challenge yourself. A year to change direction. Resolve to stop thrusting all that energy on the job – on getting ahead, making money, landing that deserved and very overdue promotion. It's a year to start channeling that same energy on conquering personal goals. Maybe, it's even time to check something off that bucket list.

The sneaker manufacturer had it right. Sometimes the simple answer to the complex question is the marketing slogan “Just DO It”. It's bleak out, the holidays are behind me. I have finally come up for air and I have time on my hands NOW. Next month things will get busier, and by Spring the pace of my life will have escalated from sprint to BQ (Boston Marathon Qualifying time). So, instead of crafting, yet another, list of resolutions for the new year, I have decided to focus on one.

Years ago, my family spent the entire month of August each year traveling around the country. We traveled by car and camped, except when we were touring major cities. The experience was amazing and by the time I was 18 I had been to all US states (except Alaska and Hawaii) and most of the Canadian provinces.

I had visited Yellowstone, Glacier, the Grand Canyon, the Grand Tetons, the Painted Dessert, Colorado Hot Springs, the Florida Everglades, Niagara Falls, Maine's Casco Bay and the Alamo. I had counted 32 bears from our campsite in Yellowstone to Old Faithful (a distance of a mere 7 miles). I saw my first (and only) grizzly bear in the wild. I shared a stream with a majestically antler-racked moose. I saw ranges of grazing buffalo. *(continued next page)*



Twenty-Five Compelling Reasons to Camp

1. Travel throughout the US, Canada and Mexico
2. See both natural wonders, national parks, forests or historic and cultural monuments
3. Visit friends or family in other parts of the country
4. Follow a favorite band on tour
5. Set a goal for yourself (visit all 50 states, camp at all US national parks).
6. Earn scouting badges
7. Test your resolve to join a branch of military service
8. Indulge in a new or favorite sport (hiking, climbing, kayaking, white river rafting, skiing; or just get some exercise and fresh air)
9. Temporarily disconnect from the stress of a job
10. Change your environs for a while (city to country; noisy to quiet; bumper-to-bumper traffic to long stretches of solo cruising)
11. Change the pace of your life (fast, furious and focused to relaxed, carefree, and easily sidetracked)
12. Sample many local cuisines
13. See original artwork or crafts (paintings, sculpture, photography, woodwork, jewelry) at museums, galleries & studios
14. Fine tune your own art or craft while camping (take photos, write, keep a journal, scrapbook of your own travel adventures)
15. Students of architecture and design can follow their passion to landmarks throughout the country (bridges, skyscrapers, town centers, homes)
16. Test the worthiness of a love interest for marriage (I know a guy who did this!)
17. Get reacquainted with your children. Have experiences with them to reminisce about in the future
18. An excuse to go horseback riding (or alligator wrestling, if you prefer)
19. Attending one or more major sports events (Super Bowl, Worlds' Series game)
20. Adventurous way to attend the New Orleans Mardi Gras or any such folk or street festival
21. See wildlife (buffalo, moose, bears, mountain lions) including endangered species and rare species
22. Can be a less expensive means of travel, especially for larger families or groups who choose to camp
23. An excuse to have a campfire any day or everyday
24. Swim in cool water streams with water that just cascaded down sun drenched mountain ridges
25. **Have some fun!**





photo credit: Ann E. Prince

My father insisted that each of us (4 kids) learn the capital of each state we visited, and what the state was known for (what they grew, built, erected or exported). So, in addition to the natural wonders we visited, we got a first hand look at some of the amazing man-made wonders the country had to offer: the Empire State building, the Lincoln Memorial, the Golden Gate Bridge, Mount Rushmore, and the Crazy Horse Monument. I believe my father's motivation was two-fold. First, he wanted his children to see all that this country had to offer, before we inevitably graduated from college and followed our wander lust to Europe and beyond. He wanted us to truly know what it was to be an American, from various viewpoints throughout the country.

Additionally, I think my dad understood HOW to educate children. Reading is one thing; looking at a picture, perhaps more enlightening. But, seeing something with your own eyes – touching, tasting, feeling, and smelling its environs, leaves an indelible impression. Small wonder that at the age of 17 I won my first writing award. An essay contest sponsored by the American Legion on 'What America Means to Me.'

So, back to my one goal for the year. Each time I helped my brothers pitch tent, carve out the requisite trench around it, gather kindling, cook, and clean-up as we camped, I promised myself that I would return and do it differently. I would revisit all my favorite locations with my own family and stay at the grand

lodges. I would leave the well-worn tents, sleeping bags, air and foam mattress, Coleman stoves and lanterns in the crow's nest of our attic. I would one-up the occupants of those Airstream campers, I oh-so secretly envied, and return to view it all from the Box Seats. I was wrong.

My resolution this year is to camp. To revisit a trip of my past or find a new road – I'm still not sure which. What I am certain about is that I will load a tent, sleeping bag, and some minimal gear into my car, hit the road, and pitch tent to ground. The experience of camping isn't so much about how you do it. It's simply about doing it. It isn't defined by tents, trailers, campers or lodges. It is an experience of the soul. It is an undertaking of understanding who you are as a person. And what it has taught me is, the closer you get to the ground, the more you will understand yourself. Ask Thoreau.

Camping isn't a Hallmark movie, set in a picture-perfect lodge where mugs of hot chocolate with marshmallows are served by a blazing fire. Where manicured families unpack designer suitcases full of unsuitable clothing for predictable but uninspired outings. Where sumptuous indigenous feasts appear out of no where. Where everything goes right. - well, until something goes wrong. And, our lodgers experience some personal epiphany that magically transforms them into better people. Whether undertaken as a solo experience, with friends or with family, camping is about exploring the unknown. Learning to create a habitat where none existed (with only a sleeping bag, or with a tent, or with a camper). It is understanding the essentials required for day-to-day living (potable water, an outhouse or toilet, shower facilities, washing your clothes, cooking). It elevates the things we take for granted in our every day life to a heightened level.



photo credit: Ann E. Prince

After you camp, you will never spill a questionable substance into natural waterways. You will be conscientious and conservative about the water you waste. You will minimize the garbage you create. You will conserve your use of wood and paper. You will ferociously protect wildlife. That will be your



personal epiphany. After one camping trip, for instance, my sister won a science fair award for her project on a water filtration system. Camping educates and inspires.

If not stated, I've implied that Camping isn't about social class. Several years ago, a friend of mine in the computer industry hit it big as an internet service provider. He and his wife bought a yacht and enticed me to join them for a New Year's cruise to Miami & the Florida Keys. Except for my anticipated seasickness, it was a phenomenal experience. But, what I was struck with was the similarity in the kinds of day-to-day requirements yachting and camping share.

	Yachting	Camping
Travel Logistics	transport to marina voyage berthing reservations	vehicle, luggage carriers, camping equipment, camp- site reservations
Food & Water	load supplies onboard	pack supplies in vehicle or back- packs
Cooking	galley	campfire, propane/ gasoline stove
Trash	disposal at marinas	some campgrounds have a "carry in/ carry out" policy. some provide dumpsters
Toilet and Shower	limited facilities onboard, some- what better at marina	modern facilities at some campsites, others more primi- tive
Laundry	marina laundromat	laundromat at campground or a nearby town
Lighting	battery-powered, recharge at marina	campfire/torches or lanterns fueled by battery, propane or gasoline/kerosene
Safety	life vests, dinghy/ tender, radio, cell phone/sat phone Adherence to rules(naval), com- mon sense	vehicle, phone, adherence to campground or park rules and regulations, com- mon sense

The parallel I am drawing is that, creating a habitat for daily living, whether on the water or on ground, involves many of the same fundamental activities and chores. In fact, once you



have camped, boating is easier. Once you have boated, camping is easier. Combining the two activities in one adventure, is a formula for an awesome adventure. Great Lakes here I come!! So, why go to all the trouble of camping? I think it is for the impression it leaves with us.

What I remember most of the Camping experience is: dappled sunlight along pine-needle-paved trails; the crackle of fire on flame-edged logs snapping sparkles of light at my dirty dungarees. I remember the smell of pine. The awe and magnificence of California redwood. The undulating waves of color on the canvas that is the Painted Dessert. I remember the sweet sound of off-key notes sung in rounds ... in the car, in the tent, at fireside. What is indelible about camping is the bond that build-

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parks/washcros.html

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ing, exploring, and experience creates.

So, whether you are ready to follow your favorite country singer on their cross-country tour; spend spring break somewhere other than Fort Lauderdale; get the kids away from endless hours of video everything; or test the strength of that emerging relationship, get onboard. Resolve to camp!

Ann E. Prince is a camper, traveler, writer, photographer, artist, gardener & flower arranger.

Camper and Traveler. Ann has camped extensively throughout the US and Canada. In addition, she has traveled to Mexico, France, Switzerland, Italy, England, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Prague, the Czech Republic, and Iceland.

Writer and Photographer. Ann is currently a volunteer with Washington Crossing State Park's Nature Center. In addition to this article, she wrote a feature article on Gardening for the Summer 2018 edition of *Nature's Grapevine*. Ann furnished the photography for this article. Additional example of Ann's nature photos can be viewed by following her on Instagram annliz_prince

Gardener and Flower Arranger. Former member of two Boston area Garden Clubs (Holliston Garden Club of Holliston, MA and Boggestow Garden Club of Sherborn, MA). Representing these clubs, she competed in the Boston Flower Show, Holliston Flower Show, Topsfield Fair, and the "Art in Bloom" fund-raising Event for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA.

Volunteer Notes

Jim Wade, Princeton, delivered two very interesting presentations on Native Americans this past autumn. Mr. Wade will return for another similar program in February. See the enclosed program schedule for details.

Ellen Coleman, Ewing, assisted with staffing and managing the Nature Center facility during fall events

Paul Moran, Allentown, helped out with trail and grounds maintenance and assisted setting up our Holiday Wreath Making program.

Ben and Jean Strauss, Titusville, assisted with Holiday Wreath Making.

Washington Crossing Audubon generously donated several hundred pounds of bird food for feeding stations in WCSP.

Washington Crossing Park Assoc. of New Jersey donated several new bird feeders and mounting hardware to the park. The new feeders have been installed at the Nature Center.

Around the Park

✿ We have removed several *Ailanthus* trees in the Open-Air Theater area of the park in an effort to mitigate an infestation of spotted lanternflies. Both *Ailanthus* and lanternflies are invasive pests in WCSP.

✿ Scout, school and home school groups from the Bordentown/Chesterfield area, the Mercer/Lower Bucks area, Plainsboro, Hamilton Twp, Hopewell Twp and Princeton visited the WCSP Nature Center this past fall. Activities offered included Growth of a Tree, Tree Identification, Ropelore, Trail Hike, Build a Rope Bridge, Shelter Building/Wilderness Survival, Rocks in the Making, Lore of the Lenape and Build a Campfire. Groups interested in visiting the Nature Center for similar outdoor education and interpretive programs should give us a call. We are currently scheduling for winter and spring 2020.

✿ **The New Jersey Arborists**, a chapter of the **International Society of Arboriculture** generously donated their professional services one Saturday in early December as part of their annual workday of service. The arborists worked mostly in the lower sections of the park west of the main entrance removing dead and unhealthy trees, deadfall and pruning dangerous limbs. The opportunity to clean up park trees was made possible through a partnership with our friends group, the **Washington Crossing Park Assoc. of NJ** and the NJ State Park Service.



photo credit: Wayne Henderek

New Jersey Arborists hard at work on trees in the Washington Grove area of the park.



Winter Programs at the Nature Center

The following is a list of activities being offered through the Nature Center at Washington Crossing State Park in Titusville, New Jersey. All events this winter are offered without charge. Some programs will require advanced registration as indicated below. Attendance is always limited and is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Programs will commence at the Nature Center unless otherwise indicated. An adult must accompany all children. In the event of inclement weather some programs might be canceled. It is always advisable to call ahead before coming out. These events are intended for families and individuals only. Programs for scouts, schools and other groups are scheduled separately by special arrangement. **Phone : (609) 737-0609**

FIRST DAY FAMILY NATURE WALK & TOMAHAWK THROW Wednesday January 1, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Come join a park naturalist for a short (approx. 1 hr.), guided, informal winter walk on state park trails. After the hike, try your hand at throwing a small ax into a wooden target. The walk is for all ages. The ax throwing will be for adults only. Children may watch. Advanced registration required no later than December 28. Please call the Visitor Center Museum at (609) 737-0623 to register. Event will take place weather permitting. Snow cover of 3 in. or more will force a cancellation of the ax-throwing portion of the program.

CONSERVATION VIDEO Saturday January 4, 12:45 p.m. *The Civilian Conservation Corps.* This presentation chronicles the rise of the New Deal's Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) as a consequence of the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression of the 1930s. Black and white Depression-era film clips, narration and CCC alumni interviews tell the story of the role of the CCC in natural resource conservation and park and forest management throughout the nation.

CONSERVATION VIDEO Saturday January 11, 12:45 p.m. *Living with NJ Black Bears.* This intriguing video provides an inside look at one of the state's most interesting wildlife species and gives some clues on how to safely share the landscape with these animals.

BALDPATE MOUNTAIN HIKE (pre-teen – adult) Sunday January 12, 1:30 – 4:00 p.m. We will take a county park trail from its trail head near Church Rd. to the top of the hill. Meet at the parking lot by Niederer's Pond (Church Rd). Advanced registration required. Bring a water bottle and wear hiking shoes.

CONSERVATION VIDEO Saturday January 18, 12:45 p.m. *Wolves: A Legend Returns to Yellowstone* . The re-introduction of the timber wolf to this famous national park is chronicled.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKI WORKSHOP (pre-teen – adult) Sunday January 19, 1:30 p.m. In this workshop, the participants will learn about the different types of cross-country ski equipment that are available and what to look for in selecting your first pair of skis. Other topics will include: how to dress and where to go skiing in New Jersey. The indoor lesson will last 1 -1 1/2 hour. If the ground is snow covered, an additional 1+ hour outdoor ski lesson will be offered. Participants will have to provide their own ski equipment for the outdoor lesson. Call the Nature Center to obtain equipment rental information. The workshop will be co-instructed by **Kevin Kavanaugh**, Ewing and **Daniel Nurmi McAuliffe**, Langhorne. Advanced registration required.

CONSERVATION VIDEO Saturday January 25, 12:45 p.m. *The Eye of the Leopard.* This video features the story of a leopard cub and her mother in Mambo, a flooded river delta in Botswana.

CONSERVATION VIDEO Saturday February 8, 12:45 p.m. *In Search of the Jaguar.* Field biologists struggle with the important questions of life as they endeavor to study the elusive jaguar in South America and Central America.

(More WCSP events, next page)

(Nature Center events continued)

THE PALEO AND ARCHAIC INDIANS OF NEW JERSEY Sunday February 9, 1:30 p.m. **Jim Wade**, former archivist and researcher with the N.J. State Museum will take participants on a journey back to the time of the last ice age, when the earliest Native American peoples entered what is now New Jersey. Discover how these Paleo-Indians lived and survived in an arctic landscape filled with strange, prehistoric fur-covered animals, like the woolly mammoth, great elk, and musk oxen - Learn how these earliest people adapted to their harsh environment and hunted with specialized Clovis spear points - See how these prehistoric hunters opened the way for new bands of Archaic peoples who followed, with new innovative stone tools and lifestyles. The program will include a slide presentation and Native American artifacts will be on display.

CONSERVATION VIDEO Saturday February 15, 12:45 p.m. **Forces of Nature**. Nature is not always a friendly or benign entity. This video examines some of the more destructive natural agencies such as earthquakes, volcanoes and storms.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKI WORKSHOP (pre-teen – adult) Sunday February 16, 1:30 p.m. In this workshop, the participants will learn about the different types of cross-country ski equipment that are available and what to look for in selecting your first pair of skis. Other topics will include: how to dress and where to go skiing in New Jersey. The indoor lesson will last 1 -1 1/2 hour. If the ground is snow covered, an additional 1+ hour outdoor ski lesson will be offered. Participants will have to provide their own ski equipment for the outdoor lesson. Call the Nature Center to obtain equipment rental information. The workshop will be co-instructed by **Kevin Kavanaugh**, Ewing and **Daniel Nurmi McAuliffe**, Langhorne. Advanced registration required.

CONSERVATION VIDEO Saturday February 22, 12:45 p.m. **Dolphins**. Although these interesting marine mammals have a reputation for being friendly and even helpful to the human species, they are surprisingly aggressive toward one another.

CONSERVATION VIDEO Saturday February 29, 12:45 p.m. **Relentless Enemies: Lions and Hyenas**. As the title suggests, this video is probably not appropriate for young children.

MAPLE SUGARING (All Ages) Saturday March 7, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. This event is a participatory demonstration in the procedures of home maple sugar production. Advanced registration required.

MAPLE SUGARING (All Ages) Sunday March 8, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. This event is a participatory demonstration in the procedures of home maple sugar production. Advanced registration required.

MAPLE SUGARING (All Ages) Saturday March 14, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. This event is a participatory demonstration in the procedures of home maple sugar production. Advanced registration required.

MAPLE SUGARING (All Ages) Sunday March 15, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. This event is a participatory demonstration in the procedures of home maple sugar production. Advanced registration required.

WINTER BIRDS OF THE PARK (All Ages) Sunday March 29, 1:30 - 3:00 p.m. Come join veteran birder **Franta Broulik** of **Washington Crossing Audubon** as we walk the trails in search of a variety of winter bird species and perhaps some early spring migrants. Advanced registration required.

(More WCSP events, next page)

**Winter Programs
at the
Visitor Center Museum
(609) 737-0623**

HISTORY VIDEO Saturday, January 4, 2:00 p.m. *Founding Fathers: Rebels with a Cause.* This 45-minute video introduces Sam Adams, John Hancock and John Adams, who will all play vital roles in the genesis of the revolutionary movement.

HISTORY VIDEO Saturday, January 11, 2:00 p.m. *Founding Fathers: Taking Liberties.* This 50-minute video tells the stories of Patrick Henry, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Thomas Paine as the colonies move forward to revolution.

HISTORY VIDEO Saturday, January 18, 2:00 p.m. *Founding Fathers: You Say You Want A Revolution.* This 50-minute video follows our Founding Fathers from the Declaration of Independence through the Revolutionary War.

HISTORY VIDEO Saturday, January 25, 2:00 p.m. *Founding Fathers: A Healthy Constitution.* This 50-minute video tells the story of our Founding Fathers constructing a constitution and building a new democratic nation.

HISTORY VIDEO Saturday, February 1, 2:00 p.m. *Founding Brothers: A More Perfect Union (Part 1)* This 50-minute video discusses President George Washington, Vice President John Adams, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and Secretary of Treasury Alexander Hamilton as they assume office during Washington's 1st term as President.

HISTORY VIDEO Saturday, February 8, 2:00 p.m. *Founding Brothers: A More Perfect Union (Part 2)* This 50-minute video takes the viewer through the two terms of George Washington's Presidency as he attempts to hold the nation together through the conflicts of the French Revolution, Whiskey Rebellion as well as other political controversies.

HISTORY VIDEO Saturday February 15, 2:00 p.m. *Founding Brothers: Evolution Of A Revolution (Part 1)* This 50-minute video discusses the Presidency of John Adams.

HISTORY VIDEO Saturday February 22, 2:00 p.m. *Founding Brothers: Evolution Of A Revolution (Part 2)* This 50-minute video discusses the Presidency of Thomas Jefferson.

**Winter Programs
at the
Johnson Ferry House
(609) 737-2515**

WINTER FOOD WAYS HEARTH COOKING CLASS Saturday, January 11, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Stay warm by the fire as Food Historian **Susan Mc Lellan Plaisted** will teach this class that offers a full day of instruction, hands on food preparation, food history, and a hearth cooked meal. Fee: \$70 / person. Must pre-register by calling 609-737-0623. For Questions and more information call 215-219-9542.

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION Sunday, February 16, 2020 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. 18th century music in the parlor, facts about our Founding Father and first president, hearth baked gingerbread program, colonial toys, games, and education. The Stone Barn wood shop will be open for visitation. Punch and gingerbread refreshments. Great family event. Free.

