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## Summer camp for adults

**Learn French while canoeing, or write a crime novel**

April 08, 2014 | By Jay Jones, Special to Tribune Newspapers

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When kids write about how they spent summer vacations at camp, those school reports typically don't include getting covered in grime while working on a railroad or plotting a grisly murder for a book. Those more novel experiences are some of what is available to grown-ups.

Themed camps for adults can last from a few days to a full week. And unlike some kids' camps, all of the participants attend of their own free will.

### Special Needs Summer Camp



[campaakeela.com](http://campaakeela.com)

For boys & girls w/ Aspergers, NLD Have  
fun & develop social skills!

Here's a sampling of what's available at adult camps this summer:

**Camp Unleashed** (locations in Beckett, Mass., and Asheville, N.C.): Canoeing, hiking and swimming — all with your dog — are among the activities at what founder Annie Brody called "an experiential retreat." There are canine behavior and nutrition classes too, and for three full days the dogs are off their leashes. The unbridled bonding, said Brody, allows humans to look at the world through their dogs' eyes, which she said "profoundly impacts the relationship."

Mark Orr, of Syracuse, N.Y., who has attended with his Labs, Greta and Shelby, said campers are people who "really spoil their dogs rotten and are glad to be around other people who are just like them." Though his dogs can't verbally express their joy, they clearly love the experience, Orr said. "By time you go home on Sunday afternoon and they crawl into the vehicle, they're of no use for the next couple of days, because they're so happy and so spent."

Sessions in Massachusetts May 29 to June 1 and Aug. 29 to Sept. 1, and in North Carolina Oct.

16-19. Rates from \$799 per person. 518-781-0446, **[campunleashed.com](http://campunleashed.com)**.

**Pinewoods Dance & Music Camp** (Plymouth, Mass.): Don't expect "Dancing With the Stars." In fact, it's a bit more like the old "American Bandstand," said Steve Howe of the Country Dance and Song Society. Everyone dances together, so as many as 150 people can be on the floor simultaneously in an open-air pavilion. Some weeks focus more on music, while others are heavy on a particular dance style such as contra, English country or square dancing. "The norm is that every dance you find a different partner," Howe explained. "People don't stay strangers for long."

Seven weeklong sessions throughout the summer are priced at \$875 to \$910 per person, including tuition, room and board. Dance experience doesn't matter. The society also runs camps in New Hampshire and West Virginia. 413-203-5467, **[cdss.org/programs.html](http://cdss.org/programs.html)**

**Les Voyageurs** (northern Minnesota): Participants in this adventure paddle back in time more than 300 years to when French fur traders canoed through the uncharted waters of Minnesota's North Woods. Part of Concordia College's extensive foreign language program, Les Voyageurs is both an immersive language course and a cultural experience. Modern-day explorers are led by French-speaking guides. "If you needed something in English, they would oblige, but for the most part it was French," said Meg Campbell, of Culpeper, Va., who took part last summer.

After orientation at a rustic base camp near Bemidji, groups of 8 to 12 people set out in canoes and kayaks for remote islands on Turtle River Lake, where they pitch their tents before preparing hearty meals over open fires. There also is plenty of time for singing and storytelling — all *en francais*, of course. "It's an amazing program, a hidden gem," Campbell said.

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For boys & girls w/ Aspergers, NLD Have fun & develop social skills!

Aug. 24-30. The fee of \$795 includes tuition, lodging (in outfitter-quality tents) and all meals. No previous exposure to French is required. 800-222-4750, **[concordialanguagevillages.org](http://concordialanguagevillages.org)**

**Mystery Writing Workshop** (Interlochen, Mich.): Interlochen began as the National High School Orchestra Camp in 1928 but now also offers an Adults Arts Program each summer. For the last three years, retired English professor Aaron Stander has taught crime fiction. "It's not like working with a group of undergraduates who are there under duress. They're there because they want to be there," he said. Stander, who is hard at work on his eighth novel, begins the workshop in the woods, where he encourages students to gather inspiration from a mock crime scene. Back in the classroom, he then guides them through character and plot development.

"I try to show them that most modern crime fiction is a series of scenes. It's like watching a film," he said. "The key element is to create each scene to pull the reader into the book."

June 30 to July 3. The registration fee of \$400 does not include lodging or meals. Writers at all levels are welcome. 231-276-7200, **[college.interlochen.org](http://college.interlochen.org)**

**Railroad Reality Week** (Ely, Nev.): For anyone who has ever wondered what it takes to keep

trains running from Point A to Point B, the historic Nevada Northern Railway offers eye-opening, hands-on training in the operation of both diesel and steam engines. "We spend time working on the tracks, working in the shops and then being part of a crew," curator Joan Bassett explained. "You follow around an engineer and a conductor, and then you get to actually operate a diesel locomotive."

She urges participants to consider bringing clothes they are willing to throw away at the end of the week, because by then they likely will be layered with grease and grime. "You get absolutely filthy," she cautioned. Despite that, some guests get hooked; former campers Anthony DeBellis and John McDonnell both work for the railway.

Adults-only June 13-20 and Aug. 22-29. Teens 14 and older are welcome to accompany a grown-up during the July 18-25 session. Become a railway member (\$30) to obtain the reduced rate of \$845, which includes all the railroading experiences plus lunch each day. Other meals and overnight accommodation are extra. 866-407-8326, [nnry.com/pages/realityweek.php](http://nnry.com/pages/realityweek.php)

[ctc-travel@tribune.com](mailto:ctc-travel@tribune.com)

## Kids Summer Day Camp



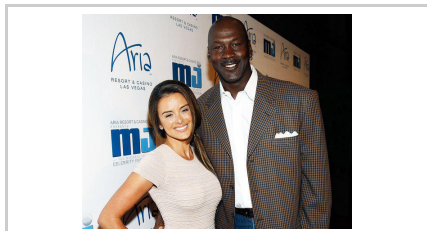
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