

Area Bloggers



[TOP](#)

Happy Birthday, Camp Latonka

JUNE 23RD 2011 BY NEWS

Happy Birthday, Camp Latonka

By Annabeth Miller

It was 60 years ago this week a place that has become special to many women in Southeast Missouri and beyond first opened. Sixty years ago this week the gate at Camp Latonka opened for the first time for girls to attend summer camp.

Now the story of how Camp Latonka came to be - and the people who made it happen - could be a great book. But for now, let's just consider the unique legacy of the place that has been a magnet for many a girl for six decades.

There are two parts of the Latonka story that I think are remarkable.

The first is the incredible Latonka tradition - the important things that have stayed constant throughout these 60 years. And for that, we have people like Beaver Brown, Bid Miles and the entire Baker-Brown-Miles families, and Illena Aslin, Edna Sargeant, and Dexter residents Edith Camp and Mary Ulen, and so many, many more who instilled a priceless purpose to Latonka and valued the girls who were there.

And the second thing that I feel is great about Latonka is how it can reach to (strong) women of all generations - and the meaning and importance and memories are equally important across the years.

The hills at Latonka are, to me, priceless. It has always held a very precious spot in my

heart. Just like Cotton Boll Girl Scouting, Latonka made such an important impact in my life. There was something so unique in our tradition - every girl had value, every girl could grow, every girl could reach inside and accomplish what she might not thought was possible. It didn't matter if you were from Dexter or Doniphan, Peach Orchard or Puxico, Sikeston or Kennett or Wardell. Latonka was for YOU. You could be independent, share thrills and joys of friendship, learn of God's incredible gifts in Nature, and sing - yes, oh sing - beautiful songs.

My thoughts go back to the 40th Anniversary (now 20 years ago!) and the Chapel service that weekend. I remember Marky Ford standing and talking about the memories in those hills. It's true - those hills, rocks, and trees hold our memories. I can still hear the voices and the songs. I can hear the cabin door slam in Hickory Hollow, the chitter-chatter of girls not-quite asleep in Shady Oak, laughter from the cabins in Gypsy Dell. The stories from the Level Acre unit house are still there ... ready to share that wonderful spot with new generations of CITs. The songs in the Dining Hall and at the Waterfront are still sung in my heart. And those darn rocks ... I still have a pretty good scar on a knee from a Gypsy Dell rock! Memories of friendships, of wonderful days in our lives, of bonds that tie each generation to that spot.

It's a wonderful thing to celebrate 60 years of a grand tradition and the generations of strong women who grew and learned and now share because of that tradition. So, I say Happy Birthday Camp Latonka.

And Happy Birthday to all the girls and women who made it all the best spot in the world!

P.S. How many still wash dishes in Dining Hall order?

Annabeth Miller is a resident of Dexter and the editor of the ShowMe Times, and a former camper and camp director at Girl Scout Camp Latonka. She is in the photo above.

LAST UPDATED ON JUNE 23RD 2011 BY UNKNOWN

<https://showmetimes.com/Blogpost/uj2t/Happy-Birthday-Camp-Latonka>

[Go to post](#)

More from ShowMe Times:



SUBSCRIBE TO "AREA BLOGGERS"

ShowMe Gold Sponsors