Wild Women Revival

By Emily Shanblatt

Back in the 1990’s four young women approached Marty O’Keefe with an idea. They had a dream of creating a space for women to thrive together. Where they could go on adventures, grow as individuals, and have a blast without the “bro-fest” presence. That dream is being revived.

The Warren Wilson Wild Women, as the group became known, saw its peak when the creators were at Wilson. Once the core four women moved on, the club and name petered out. Over a decade later, inspired by the stickers in Marty’s office, the group is thriving once again.

The first Wild Women outing was an indoor bouldering session at Climbmax in downtown Asheville. The first Monday of every month is women’s only night at the gym. Wild Women plan to be a constant presence at this monthly event. Recently, a group of Wild Women also traveled to Grayson Highlands State Park in Virginia for the annual women’s backpacking weekend. While the cold, near-blizzard conditions tried to bring the group down, the adventurous setting and comical moments made the trip a great success. Wild Women plans to meet twice a month in the upcoming semester. The first Monday of each month will be a bouldering trip to Climbmax; the second will be determined each month. Events may range from backpacking to paddling, climbing to biking, or any adventurous activity in between.

To get information about Wild Women happenings, contact Emily Shanblatt at eshanblatt@warren-wilson.edu. No skill level or previous experience is required for any Wild Women adventure. Hopefully our recent momentum will continue, and the Wild Women dream will again, come alive.

Brief Reflections on a Grand Expedition

By Peter Mink

Life like many other things is a great deal of fun. It also is a constant learning experience. We do things, we reflect on them and derive the teachings of the experience, and then we go out and do them again, only better this time. This way of life has always made sense to me. Apparently it also makes a great deal of sense to the folks who created the IDP (instructor development practicum). This 48-day expedition with NCOBS is chock-a-block full of awesome learning experiences and ample opportunity to experience, reflect, and repeat with improvement. Throughout the course we walked, paddled, climbed and taught our way through a variety of really, really cool experiences.
Brief Reflections Continued...

And now a nod to Outward Bound. Y’all rock. Since 1941 Outward Bound has been taking folks out and giving them the opportunity to learn a heck of a lot about themselves through the best medium there is (I am a little biased) the great outdoors. Well they do a pretty good job at it and in this course centered on training future instructors folks get ample opportunity to strut their stuff and improve their strutting if you will.

It also gives folks great exposure to NCOBS way of doing things. If any of y’all want to hear me blather on about NCOBS or the IDP I would love to do so. So come find me I’m the blonde wearing a sweater and a smile and I’ll talk your ear off. So in the words of Trish the NCOBS staffing coordinator “Go get dirty.”

36th Annual AEE International Conference

By Kaitlin Tripi and Meg Evans

This November, we packed our bags, jumped on Delta flight 5942 and flew across the country to Portland, Oregon to attend the 36th annual Association for Experiential Education (AEE) International Conference. We knew we were in the right place when we got off our seemingly endless flight and saw a whole slew of people wearing Chacos, Patagonia fleeces and toting BPA-free Nalgene bottles. Some might think this is common in Portland, but we knew this as the typical uniform for many outdoor educators.

Next stop was Dollar rent-a-car, where we convinced a nice man to give us a Subaru Outback for $150 instead of the usual $280 per week- had to stick to the college student budget. After hours of aimlessly driving around Portland in the rain and screaming at one another about driving directions, we arrived at our home base for the next few nights- McMinamins White Eagle Saloon and Hotel (whoever thought that combo up was a genius!)

The next morning we headed to Vancouver, Washington and checked in at the conference. We wandered around awe-struck, getting glimpses of authors whose work we’ve been reading over the past few years, including Nina Roberts, Deb Sugarman, T.A. Loeffler, and Karen Warren. We were surprised to see that T.A. Loeffler had pink hair, and relieved later to learn that she had climbed Pumori (Everest’s daughter) for breast cancer awareness!

Needless to say, we were overwhelmed with everything the conference had to offer, including the wide variety of workshops, the caliber of the presenters, and the incredible amount of experience within the attendees. As we entered our first workshop on social justice, we both felt a bit intimidated, but at the end of the day we knew more than we gave ourselves credit for.

Throughout the weekend we went to workshops on many different topics and met some really amazing people. On Friday, I (Meg) was actually able to meet with Deb Sugarman over lunch, which embarrassingly consisted of a wheat bagel with mustard and cheese from our car for me, and a fancy sandwich and salad for her. Nevertheless, I was able to show her my program from my Program Planning class and receive new ideas and praise for my work! I had read an article of hers my very first semester at Wilson and now I was actually getting to meet her. Talk about full circle!

On Saturday afternoon, we were able to sneak away to do what most experiential educators want to do-play outside. We drove out toward Mt. Hood. Neither of us had seen a big mountain in a while (out there they don’t consider the landscape in North Carolina mountainous). As we approached the mountain and the clouds parted for a brief second, we caught a glimpse of the snow-capped monster. Unable to contain ourselves, we screamed like small children on Christmas morning and flailed wildly- at one point we had to pull over to regain our composure. We spent a few hours building snow people and snapping photos of the scenery with Kaitlin’s camera, which unfortunately is still somewhere in Portland.

When we first arrived in Portland, we felt inexperienced compared to the rest of the attendees. After the weekend, our degrees and experience in the field had prepared us far more than we had realized. As we prepare to graduate next week, we extend our gratitude to Marty, Ed, and Mallory for preparing us to be successful leaders in our life post Wilson.
Thriving on the Water
By Emily Shanblatt

In 1998, Warren Wilson ranked as one of the top ten paddling schools in the nation by Paddler Magazine. Students came from far and wide to be part of the famous slalom canoe/kayak team. Coached by Will Leverette, the team won races and competitions all over the Southeast.

Since the turn of the century, the paddling program experienced a dramatic decline. The sport slowly fell apart until the culminating moment of defeat when Warren Wilson was the only team to show up at the self-hosted competition, the Styrofoam Cup.

Over the past two years, however, the paddling program has seen a new heyday. Paddling is back in, and is currently seeing the most success since the days of the competitive slalom team.

At roll practice every Wednesday evening, approximately 2.5 new beginners show up, excited and anxious to get in a boat. Many of those beginners get hooked after learning to roll, playing kayak polo, or simply experiencing the serenity and peacefulness of playing on water.

On the more experienced side of things, Wilson students are now running more and bigger water than ever. Students get up at 5:00 to run a “dawn patrol” on many of the great local rivers. Weekends are packed with trips to new and exciting places such as the Ocoee (III+), Cheoah (IV), and Tallulah (V) Rivers. Many students are even paddling the famous (or infamous) Green River Narrows (V).

Although there is no official team, the dedicated group of Wilson paddlers has created an unparalleled community and comradery. As interest and experience continues to grow, hopefully the paddling resurgence will continue on for years to come.

Alumni Update: Pat Addabbo ‘08

Greetings from the Nation’s Capital! I’m currently finishing up an internship with Disabled Sports USA (DS/USA), at their National Headquarters in Rockville, MD. Having discovered a passion for adaptive sports and programming through work on Warren Wilson’s Alpine Tower and the Universal Adventure Programming class, I was excited to pursue this position when returning to the DC area (where I grew up) after graduation and a WorldWide course to China earlier this summer.

Working in the Program Services department, I’ve spent the majority of my time working in preparation for DS/USA’s signature event, The Hartford Ski Spectacular, December 7th-14th in Breckenridge, Colorado. This is the Nation’s largest winter sports festival for people with physical disabilities, and includes the PSIA-AASI National Adaptive Continuing Education Academy, the National Race Festival (featuring youth scholarship athletes and the United States Adaptive Ski Team), a learn to ski/snowboard component, among other events. Now in its 21st year, The Hartford Ski Spectacular is again hosting over 120 special guests; Wounded Warriors from five army medical centers across the country accompanied by their friends and family.

My internship ends December 26th, and I’m currently considering a few options of where to head from here and will certainly update when a decision is made.

If anyone has questions about Disabled Sports USA, or is interested in pursuing similar opportunities to this, visit www.dsusa.org or e-mail me at paddabbo@gmail.com.
Defending My Degree
By Meg Evans

I had someone ask me recently if I was an Outdoor Leadership major. I responded that I was indeed an ODL major. The person looked shocked and told me that he thought that I was “too smart to be in ODL.” Why is that the dominant thought about our degree, even our field, on this campus? Is it because the basement of Carson actually has fun while learning? Is it because our professors involve us in the teaching, discussing, and overall understanding of the class? Whatever it is, after 3 ½ years at this school, I am getting sick of defending my degree.

According to the ODL website, the people who major in ODL are, “Individuals who understand the moral/ethical responsibilities of leadership and are prepared to exercise leadership in service to the world.” The world is in need of leaders right now. The Outdoor Leadership department has given me innumerable skills that will help me as I head back out into the real world.

In six days I will receive a diploma from Warren Wilson College with a degree in Outdoor Leadership. I did a lot more than play games with other college students for my degree. I am going to do something other than work as a camp counselor for the rest of my life (not that there is actually anything wrong with that path). And, yes, I did write papers, have intellectual discussions, and learn a lot about myself and others in Carson, room 2.

I am proud to be a leader. I am proud to know how to lead a group of 50 inner city high school kids through the woods teaching them about their natural environment. I am proud to have written a 200-page business plan in 8 weeks. I am proud that I learned, and now use, socially inclusive language. I am proud that I know how to write a grant and get funding. I am proud to be an Outdoor Leadership graduate. I think that all the misconceptions about our department might boil down to the simple fact that people on our campus have forgotten that learning can be fun. I guess they’re just jealous.

Congratulation and good luck to the December Outdoor Leadership Graduates:
Sam Christopher, Kaitlin Tripi, Meg Evans, Russell Opatz, and Tyler Parker.
Keep exploring!