

Name: Denice Becker

How have you been involved with Lutheran Island Camp?

Staff member

Please share with us one or more of your favorite memories at Lutheran Island Camp.

Being a kitchen helper with Barb Heiden, Colleen Estes, Judy Dewey, Jody Gumm and Jeanne Dicke in 1976.

While getting the kitchen ready for the 1976 summer season, Judy Dewey emptied a drawer of utensils in the dish water. A few seconds later she was standing with her soapy hand clenched in front of her and a stricken look on her face, wanting to scream but no sound coming out. Unknown to her, there was a mouse carcass in the drawer when she dumped it in the sink and she had grabbed it when she started washing the utensils. There was silence in the kitchen for several seconds until we all burst out laughing. It was then I remember thinking to myself, "I'm going to like it here."

Getting ready for the 25th anniversary celebration the summer of 1976 - painting picnic tables, making gallons of beans, heating hundreds of hotdogs and slicing dozens of buns while still getting ready to have that week's campers arrive that afternoon.

Going camping at Itasca State Park with 1976 cooks from a Saturday afternoon through Sunday morning. We used Barb's truck with a topper and borrowed Jim Gerlach's tent. Mark Peske wouldn't believe we were actually going camping until we left and didn't come back til the next day. The guy counselors boomeranged the food and supplies we took - put flour in our lemonade powder, put salt in our sugar, cut holes in our paper plates and cups and took our toilet paper.

Camp director, Bill Schultz, coming into the kitchen, saying, "Good morning, people. You too, Becker."

The drought of '76 when all the leaves fell off the trees by August, the rec field was brown and crunchy and the lake got very low.

Being a kitchen helper with Barb Heiden, Colleen Estes, Lindy Wagner, Kris Johnson and my sister, Jean, in 1977.

Learning Scripture songs the summer of 1977.

Lindy Wagner and I making replicas of all the 1977 guy counselors and setting them up in the chapel early in the morning. We had to set up Dave Golke in the afternoon because he thought he was going to intercept us.

The Super Teen Fling - husking corn, making "cowpies" (no bake chocolate cookies) and monster cookies til they were coming out of our ears.

Boomeranging the guys cabins during the Friday night dances.

Having afternoons off to go swimming and actually getting a little tan (before we knew about using sunscreen) because we made breakfast, lunch and got most of supper ready in the mornings. We were good!

Having a picnic supper every Thursday so we could use paper plates and cups, and plastic silverware so the cooks could go to an evening movie in Fergus or Wadena. We were good!

Taking lots of pictures of beautiful sunsets on the Cooks' Cabin side of the Island.
Renaming the Cooks' Cabin "The Pitz Ritz". It's now the Log Cabin.

The "Prowler" scare. I still have Gerlach's broken ski pole he thought he was going to use to defend himself, if necessary.

The front of a camper's T-shirt that said "When you're down in the dumps, pick me up a tire."

Absolute favorite memory is working with those wonderful people. Still good friends with some of them.

Tell us how God has worked through camp in your life.

God used the people I worked with to show Himself to me. My faith grew through devotions, Bible studies, Scripture songs and the pretty deep discussions of Christian faith and belief we would have. We were who God made us and we seemed to appreciate that about each other. We took those strengths with us into the world.

Please feel free to share a personal update with other alumni in the space below.

Have had several jobs. Mostly teaching at Lutheran preschools, schools, and child care center. Teaching wore me out, so now I'm really enjoying my job as church secretary at Joy Lutheran Church, Cambridge, MN. Am a member at Living Branch Lutheran Church, North Branch, MN. I live in Cambridge.

Judy (Dewey) Kretschmar, Sharon (Jensen) Thalmann, Sharon (Maasel) Peske, Barb (Wagner) Andring, and I (never been married) just had our girls' weekend at LIC this fall. We try to get together every year or so.

I see Barb Heiden every so often. She lives in Hastings, MN. We talk on the phone frequently. Colleen "D.J." Estes just stayed at my house a few weeks ago. She was visiting her aunt and uncle in Cambridge. She has been a missionary to the Natives in Pikangikum, Ontario for the last 13 years.

They're all a blessing.

What year(s), if any, were you on the LIC staff?

1976 - 82

If you served on staff, what position(s) did you hold?

Kitchen helper, head cook, some office work when the camp started being open year round.

What year(s) were you a volunteer at LIC?

What year(s) were you a camper at LIC?

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Do you have any special requests or instructions for us?