Presidents Letter to the Membership

It is a privilege to be associated with dedicated men and women who are willing to give of their time and talents to make Old Kia a special place for the youth of our country. During the last year OKKPA has been busy persevering the grounds of OKK so that young people can have a positive experience to realize their leadership skills in an outdoor setting. As past president Rick Schmid wrote, “OKKPA is more than an association. It is a community of caring people who are willing to accept and affirm each other through the spirit of the South Fork waters.”

During this past year the newly formed marketing committee has launched a plan to increase resources and membership. Such a decision has allowed OKKPA to be more inclusive of persons who support the mission of OKK. During the month of June the membership was invited to gather at OKK for a visioning conference for the purpose hearing concerns and ideas with regard to the future. The meeting resulted in the formation of two committees. It was evident that a Long Range Planning Committee was needed. Such a committee was appointed and Mark Kruger has agreed to serve as its chair. The other committee is the Public Relations Committee to serve as a liaison between OKKPA and the Chickasaw Council. This came from a concern recognizing that Kia Kima will soon celebrate its 100th birthday.

The past year was also dedicated to preserving Old Kia Kima. The Building and Maintenance followed through with their maintenance program for the buildings and grounds with a number of winter work weekends for the committee and an April Work weekend for the membership. Some of the results of these efforts amounted to strengthening the foundations to existing cabins, planting new trees, a thorough cleaning of the kitchen, sealing the floors of the bathhouse, laying more water lines, clearing areas for camping and a basic cleaning of the camp.

However, there is much more to be done and your help is needed. With buildings in the camp and increase in utilities and insurance there are plenty of financial needs. As long as we allow youth to use it without payment there will be bills. Being generous in the giving of our time and financial resources is needed. Increasing support and caring for the existing membership is crucial. You are important.

The camp is popular with groups. We still hold fast to let groups to use it that have as their objective leadership development for youth. Last year a total of 980 people did so.

We have a lot of challenges ahead of us in the coming year, but we have the fortune to make a difference in the lives of young people. We will have opportunities to work and to laugh together too. Being involved in OKKPA gives us the opportunity to celebrate the goodness of life as a group of brothers and sisters who value our core values of courage, responsibility, achievement and integrity. I invite the membership to join the fun and invite others to come and “touch a life” through OKKPA.

Thank you for all you do as a part of Old Kia Kima.

Jim Bottrell
President, OKKPA