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# Berkshires Week

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## The campiest place in the country

By Megan Whilden

*Planning ahead or waiting until the last minute, there are lots of choices in Berkshire County*

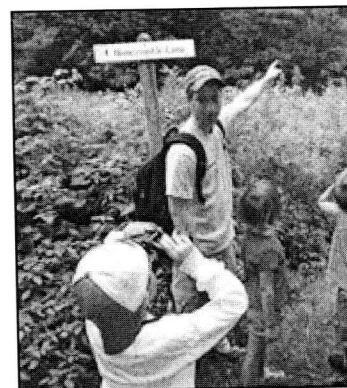
We all know there are lots of reasons to love the Berkshires, from the people to the mountains to the weather (well, maybe not all the time). This fond feeling for the Berkshires found among residents and visitors alike was often nurtured at an early age -- there are tens of thousands of alumni of Berkshire's many summer camps who still feel a powerful and positive connection to the bucolic place where they spent their summers.

And that's still true today. Berkshire County is home to at least two dozen traditional and non-traditional overnight summer camps ranging from the classic camp programs at Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA to Belvoir Terrace, a fine and performing arts camp for girls in stately Lenox manor -- with landscaping originally by Frederick Law Olmstead.

Boston magazine recently chose four of Berkshire County's summer camps as among the best in New England in a roundup that appeared in their June 2004 issue. Camp Emerson, Camp Greylock, Camp Mah-Kee-Nac and Camp Wahtitoh are somewhat pricey but wonderful full summer camps with sessions that last four to eight weeks, and a high rate of returning campers each year, sometimes carrying over to new generations within the family.

■ Camp Emerson focuses on exercising the noggin as much as crafts and outdoor activities. They have a very impressive 95 percent return rate, and hold two camp sessions that run for four weeks each. Camp director Sue Lein says they've carved out a niche by offering offbeat and challenging activities along with traditional camp activities. Activities include electronics and robotics, digital photography and moviemaking, circus and clown arts with a Ringling Brothers alumnus and Clown College graduate, and a huge stage magic program.

Their second four-week session starts this Sunday,



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and if you want to try to squeeze someone in at the last moment, give them a call at 655-8123. Located in Hinsdale, the camp serves kids ages 8-15. For more information visit [www.campemerson.com](http://www.campemerson.com).

- Camp Greylock focuses on sports for "the competitive boy," and features five baseball fields, 16 tennis courts, four soccer fields, and a hockey rink, on 400 acres in Becket. They offer one seven-week session each year. For more information, call 623-8921 or visit [www.campgreylock.com](http://www.campgreylock.com).

- Camp Mah-Kee-Nac is another boys-only camp that offers one activity-filled seven-week session. It's been around since 1929 in Lenox, and while it is also sports-oriented, it has a variety of other activities including drama, photography, arts, rocketry and a working radio station where campers can produce their own radio show. For more information call 637-0781 or visit [www.campmkn.com](http://www.campmkn.com).

- Camp Watitoh in Becket has separate campus areas for boy and girls and its session runs for eight weeks. As well as both water and land sports, and a variety of activities including a radio station and newspaper, Watitoh campers also attend Tanglewood concerts, the dance performances at Jacob's Pillow, theatrical productions at area stages, and nearby historical sites of interest. For more information call 623-8951 or visit [www.campwatitoh.com](http://www.campwatitoh.com).

The American Camping Association of New England recommends that you begin send your child to camp the summer before you plan to send your child there. But if you are a parent or grandmother who has waited until the last minute to schedule something, there's still time. There is an abundance of day camps in the Berkshires on all kinds of subjects, for both residents and short-term visitors, and a number of them still have a few spaces, so call quick to reserve one as they will fill up.

- The Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Lenox, part of the Audubon Society, has been holding natural history day camps for almost 60 years. They offer two-week day camps and a sleepover night. Campers explore 1,300 acres of forest, meadow, mountain, brook and ponds in the Sanctuary and programs include daily field trips to different ecological areas to observe animals and plants; related nature crafts, games, and songs; a hike to Lenox Mountain; a cookout and overnight, and more.

Sessions that still have spaces include three two-week camps that run Aug. 9-20 for ages 9-11 (Explorers), 10-11 (Naturalists) and 12-13 (Ecologists); and another session of two-week camps for 8-9 year olds that runs July 26-Aug. 6. Two additional sessions for ages 12-13 (Discoverers) have been added; Aug. 9-13 and Aug. 16-20, and a program for pre-kindergarten also available. Tuition is \$385 for Audubon Society members, and \$435 non-member. For more information, call 637-0320 or email to [berkshires@massaudubon.org](mailto:berkshires@massaudubon.org)

- The Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield offers a variety of summer day camps and sleepovers, but call quick: 443-7171, ext 10. The Museum camps are \$90 for members and \$100 for non-members, and there are openings in the following camps, which run from June 18 to August 1: for children in kindergarten through second grade:

**The Colonial Theatre Summer**

**The Girl Genius**  
Sex (with other people)  
Opening performance  
Melodrama  
Get ready to laugh at the hottest new comedy the latest book The Girl Genius and other people.

**July 31, 7:30 pm at the Union Street, Pittsfield**  
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Michon and Melodrama  
The Colonial Theatre

Tickets - \$25 includes copy of The Girl Genius Guide to Sex  
Tickets - \$300 includes reception and special copy of The Girl Genius (with other people)

**August 18 - 29 They're Playing Our Song**  
Opening Night Gala August 20. Directed by Jane Marder  
starring Chip Zien and Amanda Workins

Call **866-811-4111** for general admission  
or online at [www.thecolonialtheatre.org](http://www.thecolonialtheatre.org)  
For gala call **413-448-8084**

Thursday - Friday - 7:30 pm - 10:30 pm  
Saturday - 10:30 am - 1:00 pm  
Sunday - 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

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The Art of Puppetry; Aug. 2-6: Kids will finger, and shadow puppets and create theater stages.

People from Around the World; Aug. 9: Kids explore the diverse cultures of our world through games, music, arts and crafts.

Animal Discovery; Aug. 16-20: Learn about animals, and their habits and habitats. Activities include games, crafts, and a field trip.

■ IS183, Art School of the Berkshires, has spots left in some of their Art Safari camps that run Monday through Friday from 9:30 to 3 and are for kids ages 7 to 10. Tuition is a 10 percent discount for siblings, and tuition assistance is available. The art camps are at the school, located in Stockbridge. To register call 298-5252. Open camps include

A Multicultural Art Journey with Anaelisa and Diego Vanegas-Farrara; July 26 to July 30: Kids explore a wide variety of art materials, campers will explore indigenous motifs of Native America.

Textile Magic with Heather Graber; Aug. 2 to Aug. 6: Campers will explore creating with paper, the art of felting, and silkscreen and tiles.

Puppets, Masks and Giant Heads with Mike DiMisa; Aug. 23 to Aug. 27: Campers will create papier-maché style heads of all shapes and sizes, ending the week with a pageant.

■ And the Rudolf Steiner School in Great Barrington offers a summer program of camps for four age groups: Play (Kindergarten 4+), Activity I (Grades 1-2), Activity II (Grades 3-4), and Explorer (Grades 5-7). There are still spaces left in the last two sessions of these age groups, which run July 26-30 and Aug. 2-6. Each session runs Monday through Friday from 9 to 3, and the weekly rate is \$150. To reserve a space, call the school at 528-4011. A variety of activities are offered, including crafts, outdoor games, watercolor painting, music lessons, river exploration, horseback riding, and an all day field trip to a local lake.

And the above is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to summer camp opportunities in the Berkshires. Visitors and residents, young athletes and child geniuses, super-organizers and last-minute panickers, can all find someplace wonderful in the Berkshires for fun, play, and enjoy everything our area has to offer.

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