

INTENSIVES



Contributing Writer: Mike Dorman

The monsoon season sporadically rages on, the sparse Sonoran landscape grows greener, and In Balance Ranch Academy has another round of Intensives.

Each student had his choice of a week-long, extra-curricular class: an intensive, hands-on experience. Whether it be horse expeditions with equine experts Denise and Tommy, art workshops with gallery owner and ranch employee Tom, sports with Marlon, a tour of Southern Arizona with teachers Mike Dorman and Dave Black, music theory with ranch employee (and bluegrass musician) Rudy, or an exploration of the culinary arts with Lynda Hendricks, each student had the opportunity to explore a creative field of study. At the very least, it was a welcome break from the regular schedule.



Our young ranch artists produced a fine piece of work, currently on exhibit in the school building. Hanging proudly from the rafters, it brightly depicts past and current students at the ranch, and is representative of community and shared-responsibility. It embodies brotherhood, solidarity, and some tie-dyed flair: all the elements of the Ranch creatively fused onto canvas. It will be on exhibit all year!



The tour of Southern Arizona showcased the essential stops of the greater-Tucson area. Mr. Black took our students to the Sonoran Desert Museum, where they witnessed a live demonstration with a gila monster and a diamondback rattlesnake.

The following day they explored the Pima Air and Space museum, which appeals to the

dormant pilot in all of us. The boys certainly enjoyed exploring the extensive collection of antique aircraft.



The next two days of the tour were with Mike Dorman, who refreshed our weary travelers with the cool breezes from the top of Mt. Lemmon. A ski destination in winter, the mountain highland terrain feels like another country tucked away in the Arizona desert. The next day, the students explored Kartchner Caverns, voted (by people who know these things) in the top-10 *worldwide* for cave color. During both trips, the students really bonded with one another and laughed a lot.

For those with the itch to cook, Lynda Hendricks provided plenty of opportunity to explore the “inner chef”. The students made their own chips and fresh guacamole, baked feta with marinara sauce, shrimp parmesan, and smoked gouda macaroni and cheese.



All in all, it was a week enjoyed by all, and the students appreciated the chance to explore other areas of interest.

Denver AA Conference



Contributing Writer: Alex B.

During the last weekend of July, about eleven other students and I had the chance to fly into Denver and spend the weekend at the Copper Mountain Ski resort in the beautiful Rockies. The reason why we were in Colorado was to attend the Fellowship of the Spirit, an annual AA convention. The actual convention was four days long and had workshops for every single

Step over the four days. They had a speaker every night and on Saturday night they had a 70's theme dance. There was a sober potluck/barbeque and we all had a lot of fun playing volleyball, eating great food, and relaxing.



I got many things out of the weekend I spent at the convention. The most important was learning to have fun while being sober and being in the outside world and enjoy fun activities out of the normal routine. I learned that the fellowship of AA is an expansive community; you can see how it has spread throughout the entire world.

I had many favorite parts about the conference, but two things trumped the rest. The first were all the speakers—I had a really good time listening to the speakers. They were all very into the program, and had a really amazing path to recovery. They were really funny, but also brought to life the destruction of one's self and loved ones that addiction brings. My second favorite part of the trip was the fun we had to enjoy off the ranch in a more "realistic" setting. I will remember this trip as a milestone in my sobriety, realizing how much fun it is possible to have in sobriety.

Significance of the PPC



Contributing Writer: Ben F.

Last Wednesday, my therapist Thad Ryan approached me in the weight room and offered me an open spot to participate in what is called the "PPC Weekend." Essentially, I was to spend the weekend with twelve other students at Patrick Barrasso's log cabin in Northern Arizona and contribute to an in depth discussion concerning every detail of the PPC, Positive Peer Culture, and how it is implicated in life at the Ranch. I immediately took up on the offer, flattered that the clinical team recommended me as a "potential leader on campus" that could benefit from the trip in the first place.



We left that Friday. There were thirteen students, milieu managers Chris Gallego and Steve Nath, and recently hired therapist Gary Nix, all jam-packed into two minivans and headed on our way for the other-worldly landscape of Northern Arizona.



California. And I have the Positive Peer Culture system to thank.

Aside from all of the intriguing adventure therapy we did and the pseudo-fatal amounts of sugar we were fed (which all kids like, right?), I actually found the conference itself to be fascinating in and of itself. Although a thorough, seven-hour dissection of anything at all is generally taboo in the teenage world, I enjoyed learning about this peer-to-peer support system that I had no idea how to appropriately exhibit beforehand. I learned how to properly hold my peers accountable when I find them doing something destructive, how to confront them properly, how to make it so that the confrontation comes from more of a caring place, and, last but not least, how to let my community know how to avoid this behavior in the future. All in all, I now have a better understanding of how to produce a positive and productive chemistry in my culture of peers, whether in an institutionalized setting or back home in Santa Barbara,