

**Ronningen Design**

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**WEBSITES THAT DO STUFF**

# Nicholai Ronningen

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- This is my 4th CampMinder Camp
- I've been working with Dan & Co. since the early days of CampMinder, helping guide the visual design
- Here's my family



# Ronningen **Design**

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- Nicholai
- Chuck
- Steve
- Andrew
- A2



# So Dan says...

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“Come on out to CampMinder Camp.”

“I’d love to...but I’m awfully busy.”

“Oh, come on...I’m going to put you on the schedule for a presentation.”

“I’ve never done a presentation!”

“You’ll do fine.”

So here I am, and you’re my guinea pigs.

I looked at the schedule and it says I’m going to talk about **getting more out of your website.**



If you want to get more, give more.

# Common Issues

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- **My website is ugly**

This is the first reason people come to us.

- **My website is out of date**

Some things do stay the same, but many do not. When your website is out of date, some people presume you're out of touch.

- **My website is an online brochure (and my brochure was written 20 years ago!)**

No one calls up and says this to me, but it is frequently the case.

This is where everyone started. The web shows up on the scene, camp decides to participate, and then you had this big problem - **what goes on the pages?**

# I have one point

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- It's all about **content**.



# Content is king

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People are consuming more content than ever before.

# People are content junkies.

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People will gladly give up hours a day so they can consume content.

Watching the news = consuming content

Checking Facebook = consuming content

Watching YouTube = consuming content

Reading magazines = consuming content

Checking sports scores = consuming content

Watching TV shows = consuming content

# Google is a junkie.

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Google is eager to please.

Their super complex methodology has one goal:

give the people what they want - relevant content.

Are you going to provide the content people want?

# The three types of content that matter most

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- Copy
- Photos
- Videos

# Your content goes in two directions

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- Part of your website is **static**

General information about the camp

Meet the directors

Activities

Work here

CampMinder Forms

etc.

- Part of your website (& beyond) is **dynamic**

Blog

Facebook

Twitter

CampInTouch News & Photos

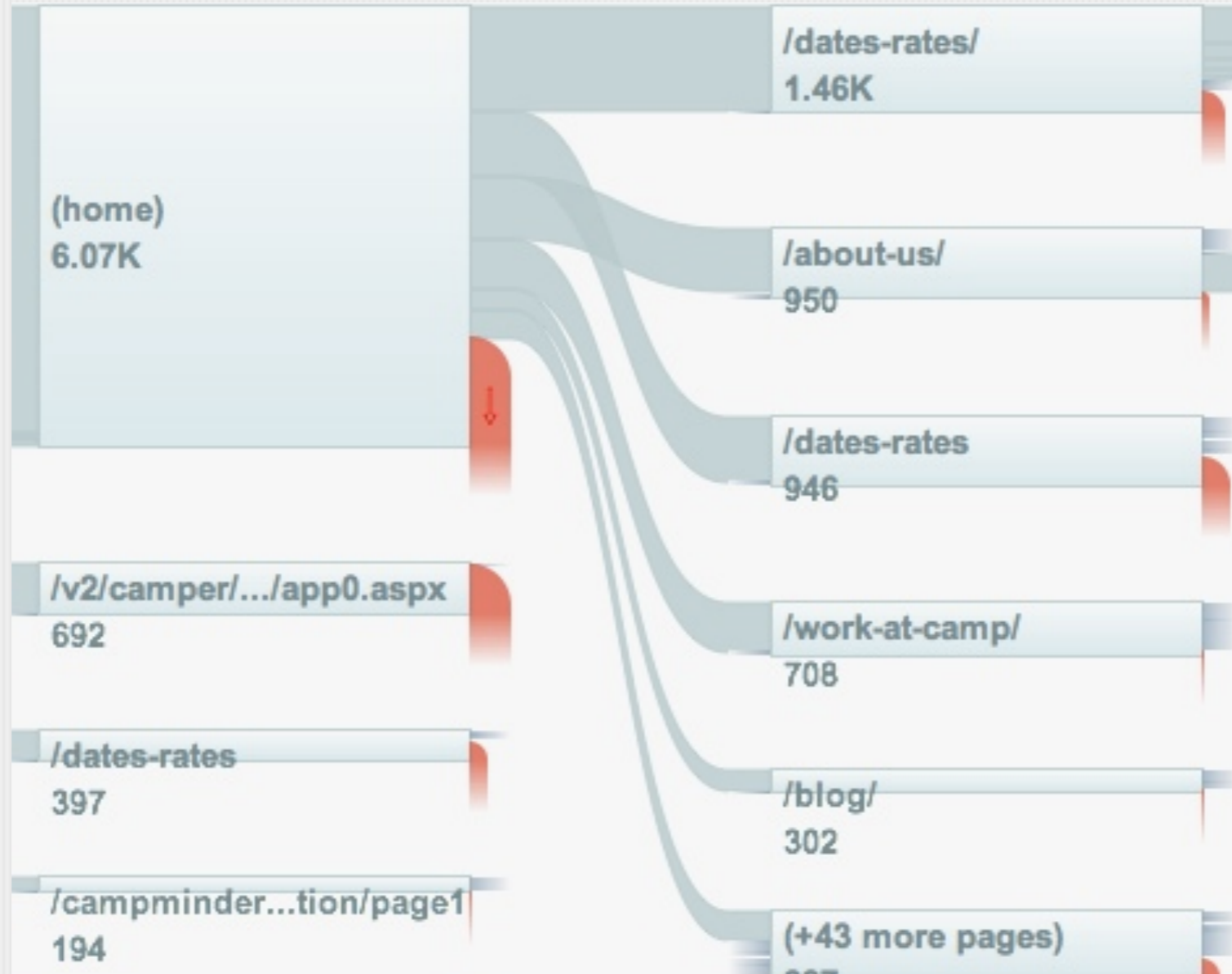
etc.

# Selling Camp

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The static portion of your website is where you find the sales pitch. It's where you make your case and hope that people will be convinced you are the right camp for their child.

To do this, you know you have to provide certain information. Historically it's been: meet the directors, we have good food, camp is safe, there are lots of activities...



Google Analytics

Where do they go?

# People are looking for...

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- Session Information - dates & rates
- About Us
- Employment Information

These are three of the **most requested pages** for our clients.

No surprises here, but **we tend to think of our websites as a whole**, rather than considering the particular pages people are seeing the most.

# Give the people what they want.

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- I'm a big fan of an easy to find "Dates & Rates" page because those are two big questions people always have.
- We're comparison shoppers.  
  
People are choosing to get more of their decision making information online. **Answer the most questions for a competitive advantage.**
- You're at Walmart; there are two boxes on the shelf. One says "it's great" but doesn't say why. The other lists major features with a diagram showing how it works. Which one would you buy?
- Consider the details people need to choose a camp and make sure they're easily found on your website.
- Even if we make our decision based on feelings, first impressions, or a friend's recommendation, we like to **validate our decision** with concrete information.
- Don't bury important information.

# About “About Us”

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- **Use familiar terms.** People go right to them because they know what to expect.
- **People are really interested in you.** Make yourself as accessible as you can. Your college degree might interest some, but what you do during the summer is much more relevant. **How will you influence their child?** What is your vision? Why in the world are you a camp director?
- A video is a great way to make that initial connection but a personal letter will do nicely.
- Parents may not read every single word but **they want their questions answered.** Does your website go into enough detail?

# Don't miss a good opportunity.

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**Look at your analytics** and find the pages that are most heavily trafficked on your website. What could you do to improve these pages?

Do they need to be rewritten? People do read (check your average time on site).

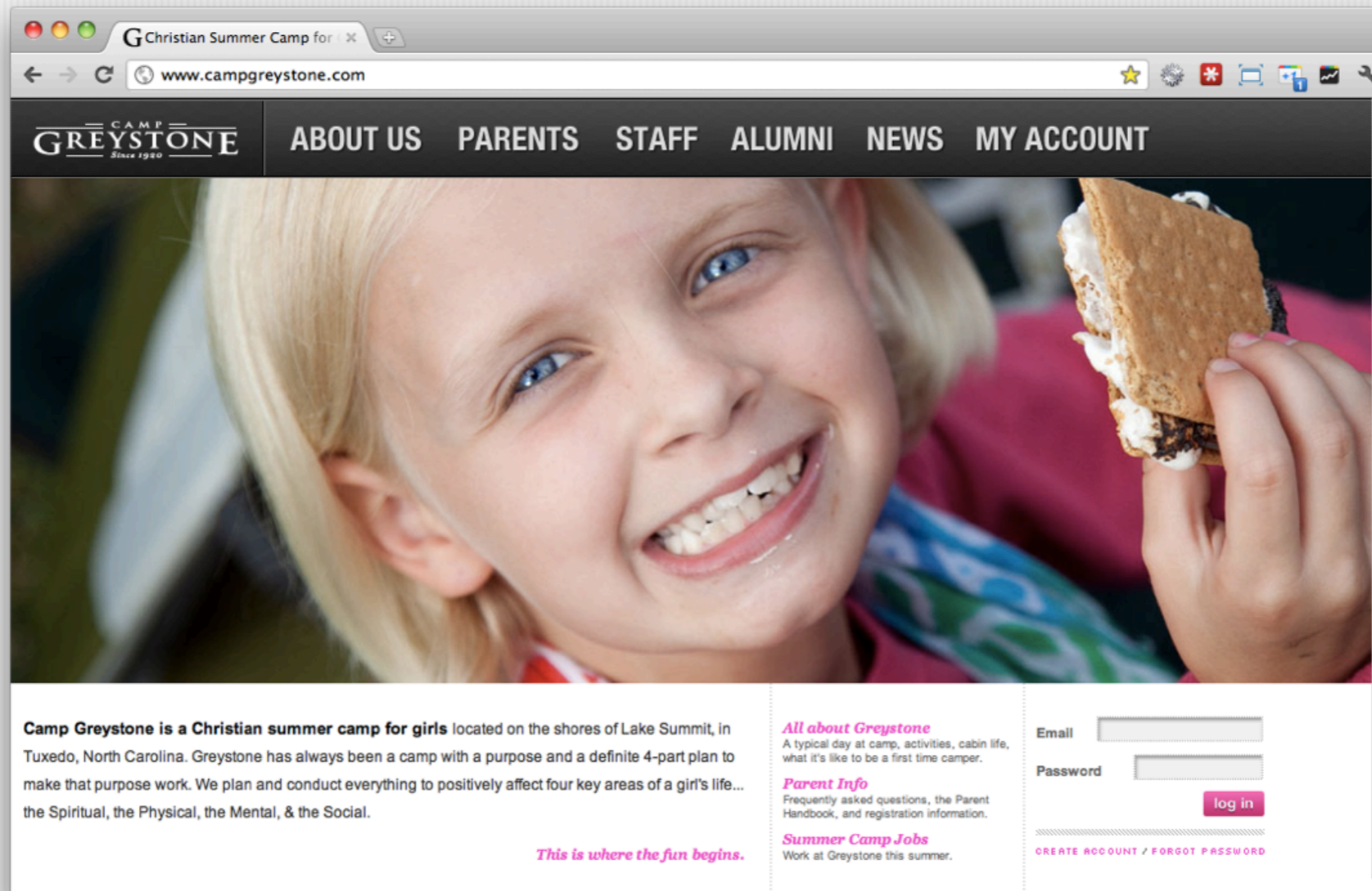
Are the photos *stunning*?

Perhaps this is the place to put your video.

# Photos have impact.

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You might not play a video and you might not read everything, but you can't skip the photos.



Camp Greystone

Need I say more?

# Photos have amazing power over your audience.

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- A good photo will stop someone in their tracks
- A good photo can convey

This camp has amazing facilities

The programming is second to none

The staff really care about the kids

The kids love this place

IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

# Don't shortchange yourself

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Copy comes first, and photos come second.

Your photos will be seen first, and they increase the likelihood that someone will stick around to read the copy.

# Photos are good for word of mouth

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Just as my heart leapt when I saw Caleb, think about how a camp parent feels when their child is on your home page. Tell me they won't call their friends.

The text of your website may not change much from year to year, but your photos should.

# Make your families ambassadors

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If you update your photos every year, your campers, staff, and parents are going to have a reason to click through your website - every page - and if they find themselves, they will have something to share!

**People need you to provide them with the content they share.**

Moving from static to dynamic

# Dynamic content includes

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- Your blog
- Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- CampInTouch

Constantly changing content

I could never do that...

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Bah, humbug!

It takes time.

# 10 years of blogging

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- Kelly Carew out at Camp Greystone started blogging before anyone knew what blogging was. Once a month she put out a news story that was essentially **photos with captions**.
- Campers ate it up. Staff started paying attention. They checked back regularly and bugged her if she didn't post.
- Kelly single-handedly kept the camp community tuned in through the off-season.
- Then Jimboy started.
- Jimboy blogs **every single day** that camp is in session. Parents are tuned in and he speaks directly to them. He talks about food (in great detail, which foodies really like), he talks about the weather, and daily life at camp. He also addresses issues - like the cost of camp - and parents post comments back.
- I've never seen a community this engaged.

# One of many comments:

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"Thanks for sharing your insight on the cost of camp. GREYSTONE is certainly over the top. That is exactly what keeps us driving 9 hours from Mississippi to the wrought iron gates of GREYSTONE. Any idea how many summer camps we pass along the way? How amazing that 175 teens choose to spend their precious summer at camp! WOW, that is what I want for my daughter. It has to be great or they will not return. Modern technology and fast times are tough to compete with. Although it is a lot of money, times are tough for everyone. Is there a better investment anywhere? Is there a better place on earth for a

young girl to spend her summer than inside the GREYSTONE BUBBLE? A refuge from the pressures of daily life and routine to focus on personal growth (Social, Physical, Mental, Spiritual), who wouldn't benefit from that? It is a generous thing that you do with your life. I am personally grateful for the profound effect that GREYSTONE has had on my child, and probably the rest of us, as well. We benefit just from following daily on your fabulous website full of photos. LOVE, LOVE, LOVE staying connected. Can't imagine how hard it would be to let her go so far for so long without that. GO BIG, Jimboy!!!

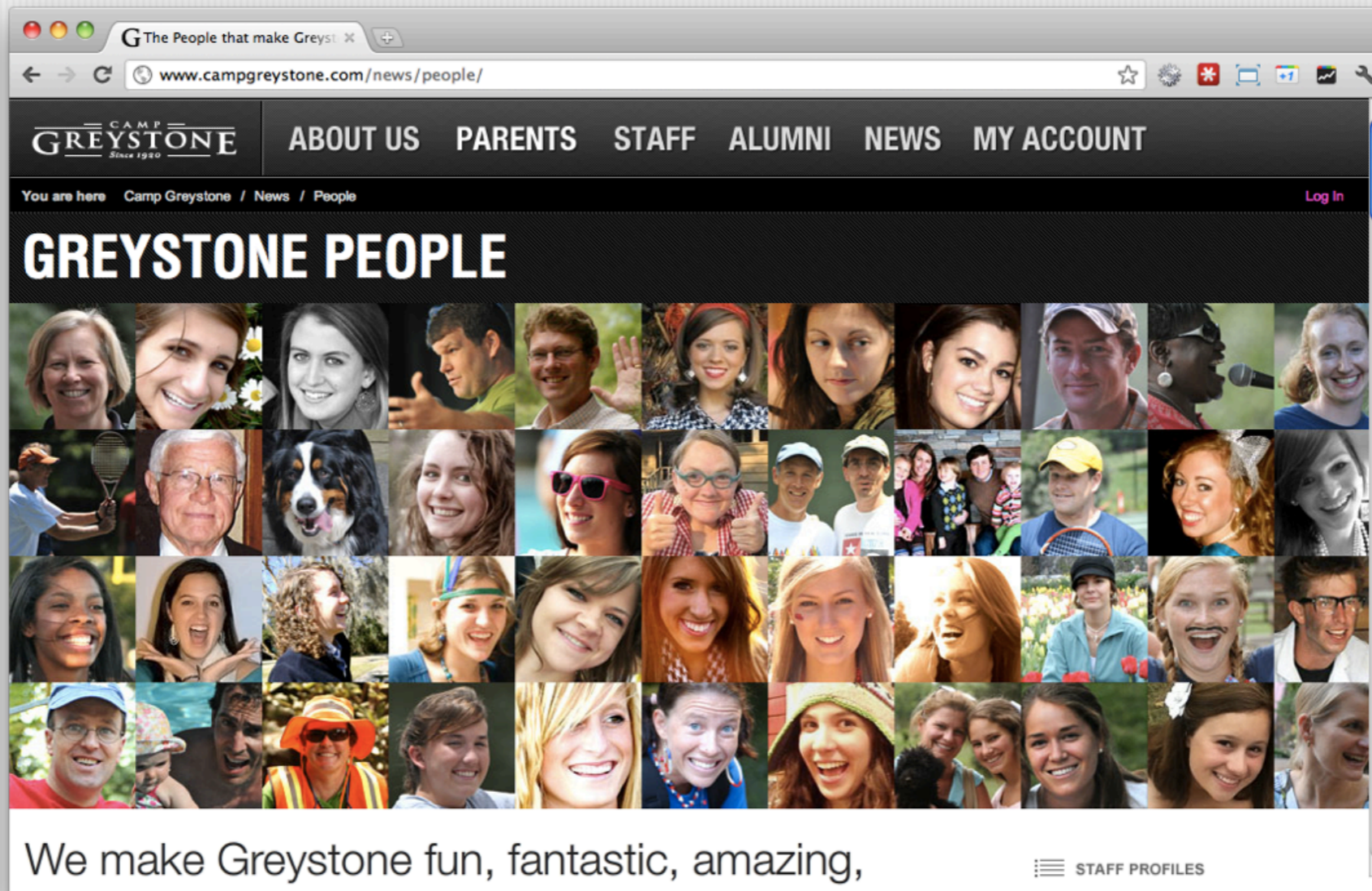
# Your camp families want to know you.

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Several years ago Camp Greystone started posting a list of returning staff. Then we added simple profiles. When we redesigned their website we pushed it over the top. People loved it.

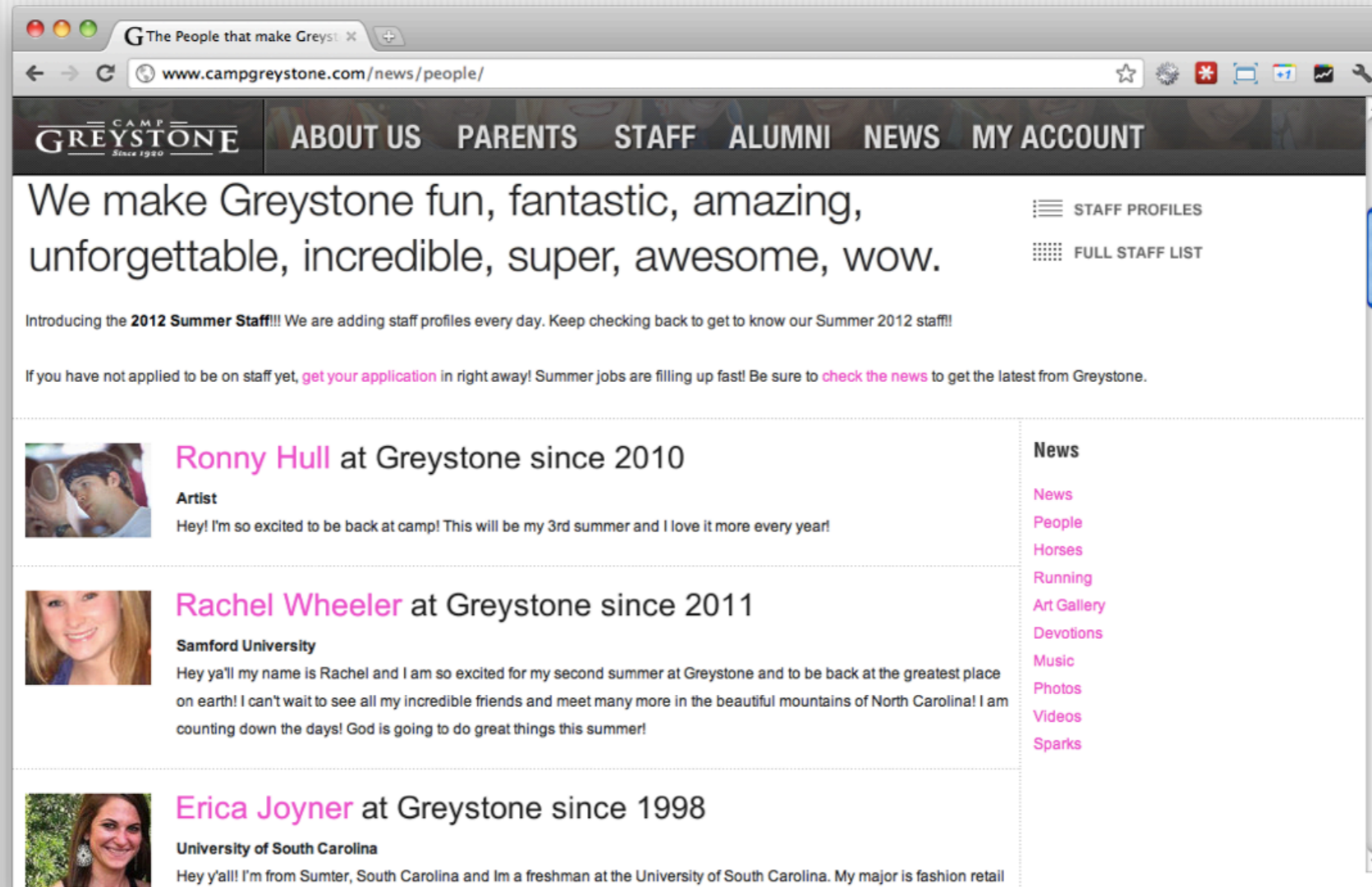
It generated all kinds of excitement for camp (which leads to great word of mouth).

On opening day, parents drove home and pulled up the bios of their child's cabin counselors. They were thrilled to feel like they knew the people in the cabin.



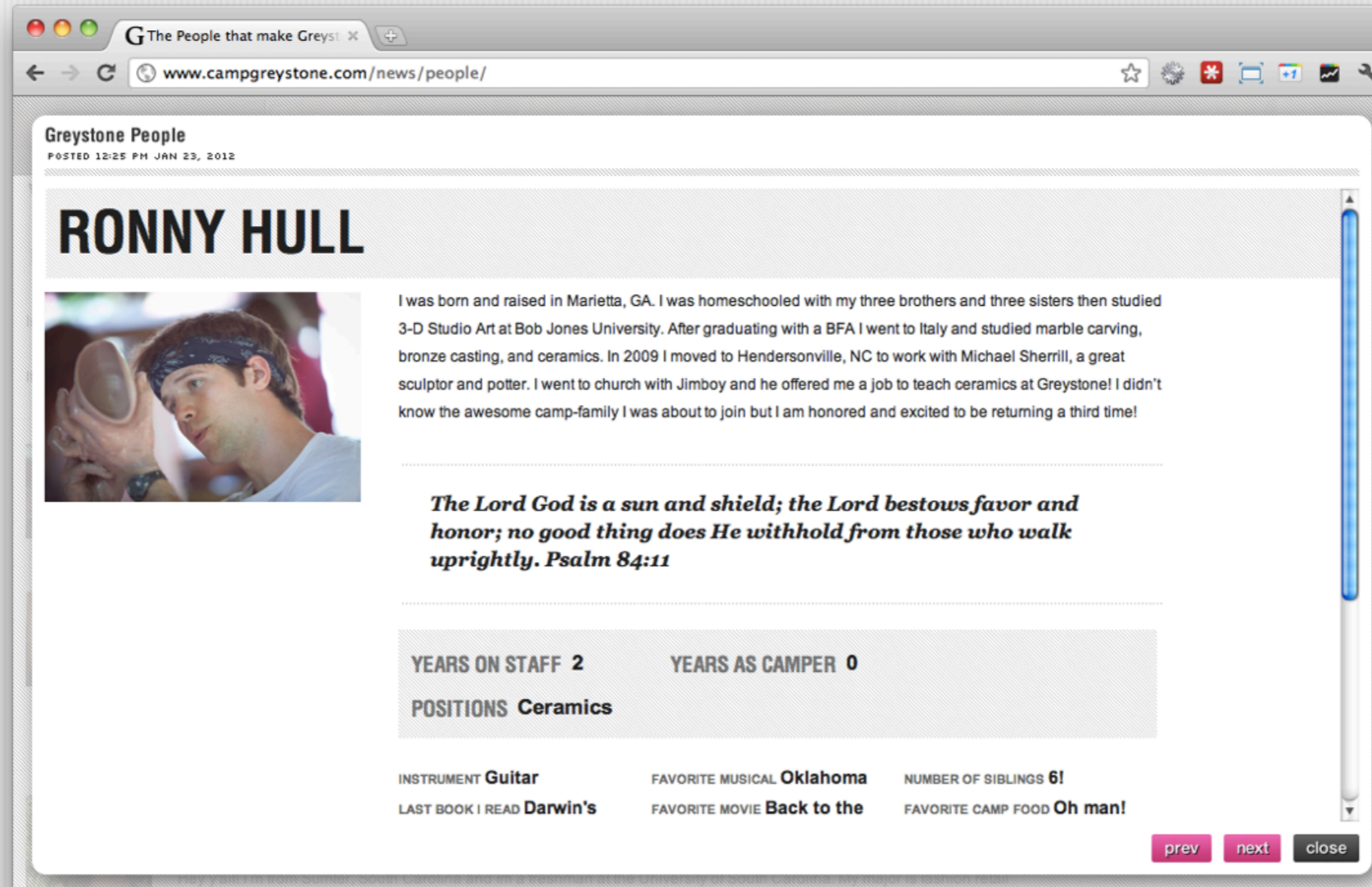
Camp Greystone

People page



Camp Greystone

People page



Camp Greystone

People profile

Greystone has raving fans.

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They cultivated their fans online.

Giving people what they want...

# Content, content, content

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This is the most difficult part of building a website.

This is hardest thing to keep fresh.

People avoid it like the plague.

# Is your content relevant?

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Going back to “About Us,” when was the last time you read through that content?

# I hate fluffy bunnies.

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“Camp is the most amazing place. You’ll make life-long friends. Blah, blah, blah.”

Everyone says it, everyone means it, but it doesn’t mean anything.

People want proof. **Tell me a story** - a story about someone making friends - and fill it with concrete details. I’ll remember your story.

Fluffy bunnies disappear the moment I click away from the page.

# Start today.

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So it's been a few years. You can start making changes today.

Websites are easy to update, especially the copy.

The hard part is figuring out what you need to say.

# You can do it.

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If content is what people really want, it's worth the effort.

Great websites have great content, period.

# Personality goes a long way.

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People want to feel like they know you.

When you write, let your personality come through. It draws people in.

Your website is all about you.

People are interested in you.

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Camp directors are some of the most interesting people I know.

# Camp Directors

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- dress up in crazy outfits
- dance the funky chicken
- sing at the top of your lungs, even if you can't sing
- inspire
- motivate
- lead

Your website should be as interesting as you are.

# Your website

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- should reflect your personality
- should reflect the atmosphere of camp
- should be a **communication tool**

Your website is about communication.



# Questions

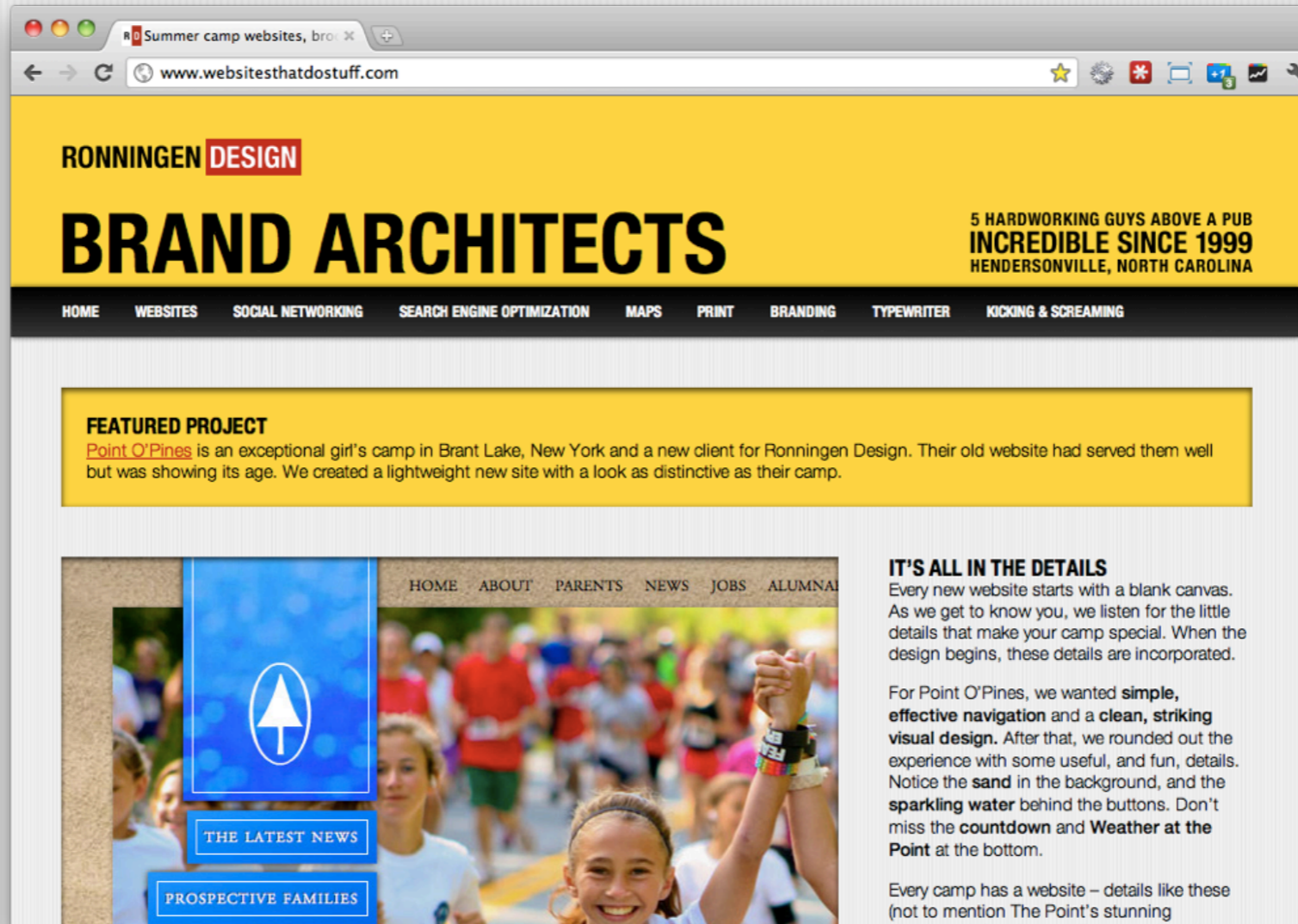
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There's a lot I didn't try and talk about today. Feel free to ask about anything.

SEO

Social Media

Branding



Ronningen Design

websiteshatdostuff.com