

THE Zingette

October 2006

Welcome to the Alumni Association!



We hope you're as excited to receive this inaugural edition of *The Zingette*, the newsletter of the new Camp Kawartha Alumni Association, as we are to produce it. Started by four current Camp Kawartha staff members, this association hopes to maintain connections between people who've spent summers and created memories at Camp Kawartha.

As you will certainly know, Camp Kawartha is a special place. Each summer, individuals from all walks of life come together with the common goal of creating a magical summer for every camper who passes through the gates. During those two months, strong bonds of friendship develop between those privileged to call themselves Camp Kawartha Staff.

The open and accepting atmosphere allows friendships unlike any others to form between

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Thanks to Ryan Adams, Liam Churchill, Gabriel Huebsch, Jason Huffman, Fiona Lasenby, and Geoff Kyle for their contributions.

Comments or questions? Send the alumni association an email at alumni@campkawartha.ca.

Check out the alumni section on the camp website, www.campkawartha.ca/alumni.

Front-page photograph by Gabriel Huebsch.

An Open Letter from Evac

Hello fellow Camp Kawartha alumni,

My name is Ryan, but many of you know me as Evac. I've been asked to summarize my thoughts, feelings, and experiences about Camp Kawartha in not many words, and I'll give it a shot, but if you know me, you know that I am not very good at "keeping it short."

First, though, I think the idea of having a newsletter for camp alumni is awesome and I'd like to thank all those who got it off the ground. I'm honoured to have been asked to contribute to the premier issue.

I can honestly say that my time spent at Camp Kawartha had more of an influence on the person I am today than any other person, place, or thing in my life. I attribute many of the things that I am proudest of, as well as the things that make me happiest, to the fact that I spent my summers at camp.

I first arrived at camp a shy, quiet, and insecure 12-year-old boy. I remember watch-

ing the counsellors and thinking how much fun it would be to have their job.

During the four years I spent as a camper my self-confidence grew almost as much as my desire to work as a counsellor. One of the happiest days of my life was when V (the Program Director at the time) called me and offered me a job! That phone call was the beginning of six years that would change the direction of my life.

During my first two summers at camp, I worked as a cabin counsellor. My first summer was a great learning experience for me. I made every rookie mistake possible: I put way too much gas on the Mystic Circle fire and we had to move the kids back thirty feet into the woods before lighting it; I almost chopped off Blaze's hand with an axe during "If I Were Not A Counsellor..."; and I allowed my cabin to perform a crazy Tool song for air bands, which resulted in no

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Buildings going up left and right

Earlier this autumn, the camp hosted the International Straw Bale Building Conference, and participants helped with the construction of a new office, one of a number of new buildings that have gone up at camp in recent years.

The camp hopes that the new office will be completed by the spring, and when the move is complete, it will allow the old office to be used as a summer camp office and staff lounge.

The new office, which will eventually be heated by a network of pipes in its floor, was built using straw bale construction. Some other new buildings at camp have been built using the same method.

One of the most prominent and desperately needed additions was the expansion of the Dining Hall. Over the past few years, the camp has grown to accommodate about 120 campers and up to 45 staff, pushing its capacity to its limit. The extension of the Dining Hall, which saw the replacement of the old mudroom and porch with a large indoor area, has allowed the whole camp to continue to eat together.

To recognize the contributions of the Rotary Club of Peterborough, which provided substantial funding and more than 3,000 hours of volunteer work, the camp named the extension Rotary Hall.

This large area has been used for a variety of purposes—as an indoor area for rainy days, as an eating area, as the stage for talent shows, and many other uses. On the roof, a solar panel and small wind turbine generate some of the power required to run the lights.

Other additions include a straw bale greenhouse and a vegetable garden. As well, the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire gave financial support to the construction of a cabin to accommodate

campers with autism and facilitate their integration into camp life.

The camp has also been the recipient of a number of cottage buildings, which now house both campers and staff during the summer. These include a small Bunkie donated by Veronica Lam, a large staff cabin donated by the O'Reilly family, and a cottage donated by the Gainey family. These recent additions have been essential for the increase in the number of people at camp.



The new camp office in an early phase of its construction. With any luck, construction will be completed well before the start of camp. (Photo: Gabriel Huebsch)

Years later, still grateful

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more air bands as an EP and no more recorded music at camp for about two years!

Even with all the blunders, I had the time of my life. I learned so many lessons that year that have continued to help me today in my current job as an elementary school teacher. I learned how to motivate groups of kids, as well as how to effectively plan and deliver a lesson.

My second summer will probably always be my favourite. I had such a good time that summer that I think I kept going back to camp over and over in an attempt to somehow recreate it. That summer was great not only because of the great staff and creative programming at camp, but also because it was the summer that we began having staff parties on changeover weekends.

Believe it or not, the legendary Camp Kawartha staff parties were not as common before that summer as they would be after

it. I learned how important it is not only to work hard, but also to play hard.

During my third and fourth summers I ended up in a position that I had never expected. Hired as a counsellor, I was looking forward to a third year in that position, but due to an injury in the tripping department, I was approached to replace Carlos and lead the Sr. Tripping program. I was hesitant, to say the least. I would never have applied to be a tripper myself: the last long trip I'd been on resulted in my nickname!

I don't accept change very well, and I was perfectly happy being a counsellor. On the other hand, it was nice to be asked. I accepted, and it ended up being an extremely great experience for me. By being gently pushed out of my comfort zone, I learned that I was capable of more than I had given myself credit for, and that I actually really enjoyed tripping!

My last two summers were by far the most

rewarding. I moved from tripping into the position of LIT/CSD director. I loved these positions! Having the opportunity to pass on my love for the camp and the experience that I had gained from working there to the next generation of staff was the greatest way that I could think of to end my tenure at camp.

It was these two years, I believe, that convinced me that I should pursue a career in education. I learned how to plan and run a lesson, keep a group of students on task and I learned to make whatever I teach interesting and interactive. I still use those skills today in my lessons, and I believe that I am a better teacher because of the skills I gained as the LIT/CSD director.

Currently, I'm in my third year of teaching at Terry Fox P.S. in Ajax. Five years of university made me "qualified" to teach, but I truly believe that the summers I spent at Camp Kawartha did more to prepare me for my career than anything else. I will always love our camp and be grateful for the years I spent there.

—Ryan "Evac" Adams

Camp just keeps on growing

For the first time in recent memory, Camp Kawartha ran two separate month-long leadership programs this summer, extending the Counsellor Skills Development (CSD) program from three weeks to four, the same length as the Leader in Training (LIT) program.

Along with the expansion in the length of the CSD program, both leadership programs were full, with twelve participants in each session of the programs, for a grand total of 48 leadership campers over the course of the summer.

Not only was the CSD program extended; it also had two leaders. These two changes allowed the CSD program to change in scope as well: it maintained its traditional focus on hard skills like life-saving awards, ORCA levels, and first aid, but put more of emphasis on soft skills like group dynamics and team-building.

As well, Camp Kawartha launched a new program this summer, the three-week "Pre-Leadership Camp" for boys and girls between the ages of thirteen and fourteen



Extending the CSD program meant they could take a five-day out-trip. Here, July CSDs pose after a mud fight. (Photo: Kate Lennox)

who want to stay at camp longer.

The program, during which the campers participate in a regular two-week session and then go on a four-day canoe trip, hopes to encourage team-building and camaraderie among young people who are just starting to think about what leadership is and are starting to become more aware of the effects of their actions on others.

The camp has also expanded its tripping program, offering a Junior Trip program to

campers aged ten and eleven and another for those aged twelve and thirteen. The trips take place during one-week sessions and campers go on a four-day canoe trip in the Kawartha Highlands area.

In keeping with the expansion of the tripping program, Gabriel Huebsch (Dozer) is hoping to start a tripping leadership program for next summer; the program would be an alternative to the traditional LIT program.

In addition to the expansion of leadership programs at camp, this summer saw a significant increase in the number of staff members hired for the summer. More than forty full-summer staff mem-

bers and many more volunteers, who made significant contributions to the summer camp, worked hard to make sure that all campers got the magical experience they deserved.

Despite all the changes and growth at Camp Kawartha, there remains a strong commitment to the traditions that make it such a wonderful, unforgettable place. Foremost among these, of course, is Zingtong.

Remembering Ben Byrick

Tragically, this Canada Day long weekend, Camp Kawartha's Alumni lost one of our own. Ben "Whipper" Byrick passed away while exploring the beautiful west coast in Bella Coola, British Columbia. Ben died at the age of 24 as a result of an accident while swimming.

Words lack the descriptive power to emphasize what a person can mean to a group, a culture or an organization. I had the privilege, as did dozens of other staff members, to share the summer of 2000 at Camp Kawartha with Ben Byrick, or Whipper, as he was so fondly known. To understand the impact that Whip had on the camp as a whole you didn't have to look much farther than the goofy grin he so frequently wore.

Using any resource at his disposal for a laugh, Benny would dress in his classic banquet outfit, use a mop as a prop, or ask a question so out of left field that all you could do was muster a "what!?" broken up by laughs of disbelief.

Whip loved to play practical jokes. As a near nightly ritual he would sprinkle sand on my mattress in the cottage and then, while snuggling up in his own bed, he would quietly listen as I came in and complained aloud about how frustrated I was getting that someone was so persistently doing such an

awful, childish, unfunny thing to me.

Whipper also left an impression on the campers. He would always take the time to answer any questions they had, no matter how ridiculous they seemed. More often than not, he would come up with a response that was as shocking as the original question.

Whether it was raiding the Tuck shop late at night, playing Zingtong, cleaning the Colossals, or building shelves, shoe racks, or other "Cottage Creations," Ben brought a thrill of passion and childlike exuberance to the task.

I was affected by Ben that summer, just as I was affected by all the other staff members. As a group, we fed off each other's reactions, drew strength from each other's triumphs, and applauded the creativity that our ever-expanding comfort zone afforded us. I'll remember parts of that summer and the people who help create it as long as I live.

Those, like Whipper, who affected me will forever be carried in my memories.

—Geoff "Bunker" Kyle



The camp planted a tree in memory of Whipper, and the summer camp staff donated to a camper subsidy fund in his honour. (Photo: Gabriel Huebsch)

Join us in May for the Alumni Reunion

Camp Kawartha will host the First Annual Camp Kawartha Alumni Reunion from May 25 to 27. This weekend will be full of fun and games and allow us to reconnect with old friends while making some new ones. It will also provide us opportunities to see how camp has grown and to give back to the camp.

The weekend begins Friday evening with a snack and campfire and continues until Sunday afternoon. There will be plenty of opportunity to mingle and share memories and photos with each other. Part of the weekend will be devoted to doing some work at the camp. By painting a few cabins or marking out some new trails on the range we can give back to the camp while spending time with friends reminiscing. It won't be all work, though, so bring your guitars and bongos, because there will surely be some jam sessions and campfires, maybe even a game of Zingtong.

More details will be provided in the up-



The Alumni Weekend will give you the opportunity to reconnect with other former staff members and do some good work at camp. (Photo: Gabriel Huebsch)

coming months on the website and by email. So, mark your calendars, and keep your eye

out for the spring issue of *The Zingette* for more information.

Alumni Association working on many projects

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people who are truly comfortable in their skins. It is, though, an unfortunate fact that as time passes we drift apart, drawn by various opportunities and endeavours. This means that many of us have lost contact with those whose friendships we cherished so much.

Have you ever wondered what happened to one of your co-counselors? What about the tripper who led that amazing trip with your senior cabin? It is to help former staff find out about and keep in touch with each other that we have created the Camp Kawartha Alumni Association. We hope to rekindle those friendships sparked long ago and to reconnect you with the camp, a place where many of us spent a large portion of our youth.

There are several developments underway which we hope will assist in forging a stronger, more lasting sense of community among the alumni. Currently we are in the process of reconstructing the alumni link located on the Camp Kawartha website. Upon completion, this page will host a registry and forum that will enable alumni to

post stories and pictures, view alumni association updates, and share contact information in a secure environment.

As well, the back of the dining hall has been devoted to memories from summers at Camp Kawartha. This includes alumni photos and a visual history of the camp.

Finally, and most excitingly, the camp will host an alumni reunion to be held in the last weekend of May. The event will start the evening of May 25. For more details, see above.

The committee itself has been developed by four current staff members in conjunction with several members of the Camp's Board of Directors. These four staff members are:

- Fiona Lasenby (Dipper), who has been involved in the camp for fifteen years as camper and staff and is currently the Assistant Director. In the spring of 2006 she completed her degree in Outdoor Recreation from Lakehead University, and she is presently enrolled in Teacher's College at Trent University;
- Jason Huffman (Chomski), who has been the Waterfront Director for the past four years. He is currently completing his degree in Sociology and Indigenous Studies at Trent University

and will be attending Teacher's College next year;

- Liam Churchill (Torch), who has been on staff at camp for six years and was a camper there for five years before that. This past summer, he was the LIT Director, and he was Head Counsellor for two years before that. He is in his final year of his BA in Political Science at McGill University;
- Gabriel Huebsch (Dozer), who is 22 and in his fourth year of a physical geography degree at Trent University. He's spent the better half of his life at Camp Kawartha and is amazed by how much has changed since 1995. For the past two summers, he's been the CSD Director, and he's currently working on starting a new tripping leadership program for next summer. Tripping is one of his top passions along with ultimate frisbee and photography.

The four of us are all very excited by the positive feedback we have been receiving and we look forward to hearing from you in the future! Please feel free to contact us at alumni@campkawartha.ca with updates, photographs, memories, and further contact information from those who aren't yet in our database.