



THE OCONTO ECHO

THE OFFICIAL CAMP OCONTO ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER • FALL 2007

Director's Note

Dear Alumnae,

We enjoyed a great summer at camp this past summer!

It is great to hear from so many of you via the website, but also dropping by! We love having visits from alumnae over the summer. Off season visits are also welcome however, we need you to visit in a certain way! Please be aware that Wally and Trevor, our wonderful maintenance men are in camp Monday to Friday from about 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. During the winter, they will be in the workshop, making paddles! Often fishermen use our road to get onto the ice. When Wally and Trevor are in camp they usually close the gate – however, it is sometimes open! Please, during the off season, e.g. October to April always park outside of the gate - never inside. The reason for this? Sometimes people have gone in, parked, walked around, and Wally and Trevor don't know they are in camp and locked them in! So please, you will see to the left and right of the gate areas where you can leave a vehicle. Make sure people can get in and out the road, and hop the fence – it is easy to get through.

All the best,

Lisa Labbett Wilson, Camp Director

Alumnae daughters at Oconto this summer – we had many campers who are daughters, nieces, and grandchildren of alumnae. We all get a great kick out of the pillars in the dining hall where plaques are posted for different categories. There are pillars for the following; 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, 2nd generation, and 3rd generation. I wonder who will be first on the fourth generation plaque!

Camp Awakening

Camp Awakening is thriving at Oconto. This camp for girls with physical disabilities is going great! Approximately 28 girls each summer get to participate. They do regular camp, but a major focus of their program is to go on canoe trips – complete with portaging and all!

THE OCONTO CAMBERSHIP FUND

Thanks to your generosity, the fund has helped to send many girls to Oconto. A reminder, this charity (yes, you can get a tax receipt) is for girls who have been at Oconto, however, finances prohibit their return to Oconto. Or, a recipient may be the child of alumnae who can't afford to send their daughter to Oconto, but really want their child to have the Oconto experience!

E-mail – Please send us your current E-mail address so we can notify you when the Echo is available for viewing on the website at www.campoconto.com.

NEW WEBSITE...Please check out our new website at www.campoconto.com

Please help us spread the word about Oconto!

The best way to get the word out about Oconto is YOU!

Over and over, people tell us they have heard about Oconto from a friend or family member. We need you to talk about Oconto and share your many experiences. To

thank you for spreading the word...ask the family you tell who registers their daughter for the first time to write your name on the back of the registration form where it says, "How did you find out about Oconto?" As a thank you we will send you a snuggly fleece blanket with

Oconto, "I passed it on" embroidered on the edge.

Memories of Oconto

We get many letters from families expressing their warm thoughts about Oconto.

Here is a sampling of a few...

Corie Bidgood – "This is a Christmas present that I gave to some of my friends from camp that were in the video. I know that it made me cry when it was done. I want to thank you for camp. It is definitely the best thing that has ever happened to me. I have great friends at home but at camp I can totally and fully be myself. At home I would never be caught wearing shorts, camp who cares I'll wear a biking for all I care. I know that at camp no one judges you by your appearance. I wouldn't be able to if I tried, I think that every girl at camp is gorgeous. The friends at camp are the best friends I could ever make. I can't even start to explain how much camp means to me, and even though this letter may not be long I want to thank you so much with all of my heart for showing me what true friends are.

Once again thank you so much for camp. I can not wait to see everyone next year. Obviously you've seen how sad it was to leave your friends. Here at home my friends don't understand what it is like. Well I find it hard to explain so yes, that's all there is ...Merry Christmas." Love, Corie

Shannon Corbett - now in training to become an Ob Gyn, tells us she spent a lot of time reflecting on her choice to pursue a career in women's health, and feels that going to Oconto most definitely played a fundamental role in influencing her decision.

"The best times of my life were had at camp, and I often think of the many adventures on which I embarked over the 13 years that I was a camper and staff counsellor. The support and compassion I received as a camper contributed to my growth in many facets of my life. I don't know if I would have accomplished what I have this far in life, if I had not had so many incredible experiences at camp. Every July, I would discover a little bit

Memories of Oconto

more about who I was. I learned to embrace my strengths and to love myself...something that many young women struggle with and might never learn to do. How wonderful it was to get onto the stage in the Main Lodge and make a fool of myself without worrying about what others were thinking...it was absolutely liberating!

In my profession I now work with many women, young and old...It is unbelievable how frequently I find myself employing many of the lessons that I learned as a young camper at Camp Oconto. Thank you for so many memories...when I become more established in my career, every year I will be sponsoring a camper who is in need to go to Camp Oconto”.

Dale Taylor Deforest (70's)

When parents ask about the value of the camp experience for their kids, how can you put a price / dollar value on experiences like this? You cannot get this sitting in front of a computer and going on MSN.

When I dropped Meghan at Queens in early September, they had a parent's orientation seminar. I was shocked to find out that 40% of the first-year students have never had a "live away from home" experience. It is no wonder that some of these kids have a huge, difficult time adjusting to university life.

Good grief, I cannot imagine NOT going to camp. I cannot imagine not having my kids have the opportunity to experience camp life and to make friends that potentially last forever and live in a group situation where they learn to function independently and within a group/community setting.

Bronwyn Lewis shares her thoughts: “I came across the camp website (first time in years) and saw the photos. There hasn't been a day go by especially in the summer that I don't think back at the days of relaxing in the sun, sailing or just doing camp activities. Those had to be the best summers of my life so far. I look forward to the day I can send my kids to camp and hope that they will create the kind of fond memories that I have with Oconto.

A letter to June and Cliff gives several updates of Betsy's life...

Trotter, Betsy Chalmers; The closest I have been to Eagle Lake since my summers at Oconto was a visit on summer that took us on a day trip to Kingston to see Fort Henry. I do remember arriving in Kingston by red canoe many years ago. We donned our dry camp uniforms that had made the trip in closed, metal tins and walked the main street of the city. I often wrote letters to my grandmother while I was at camp and she related tales of my adventures to a rather proper aunt who lived near her in Virginia. Once during a visit the aunt cornered me and asked if my parents had forced me to go to such a place. She obviously had never had the

Memories

wonderful experience of sleeping in a tent at the end of the footpath to the left of the dock. As you know, the two rear tent supports were actually in the lake. The sound of the water lapping against them, the clear call of a loon, and the sight of the mist rising off the lake early in the morning were beyond her appreciation.

Valerie Young wrote, “I was shocked to see my face staring back at me in a 1987 Camp Oconto picture posted on Facebook! It led me to this website and a trip down memory lane. I am so pleased to see that Oconto is still going strong. I cannot wait until my daughter is old enough to attend!!!”

KEEPING IN TOUCH.....

What's New?

We're always so excited to hear from alumnae and happy to share their life stories and their personal memories of Oconto with you!

Please continue to keep in touch!

Anderson, Sarah (90's-'04) is living in Edmonton and as of this past weekend, is working as a Doula! She is in the process of applying to Midwifery programs and hopes to start her training in September 2008 in Vancouver or Seattle. Her partner Daniel is working on his PhD at the University of Alberta, doing research in Comparative Literature and teaching courses in the Department of Native Studies.

Pidgeon, Emma Alsop (80's) is pleased to announce that she has a baby daughter who was born on May 23rd, 2007. Her name is Estelle and she is the youngest sister to Zoe (6 yrs.) and Finley (3 yrs). She was born at East Toronto General at 3:02 a.m. (...funny thing, I was admitted to hospital at 2:55 a.m. - yes, 7 minutes to spare!). She weighed 7.4 lbs. and was 21 inches long.

(see photos on page 12)

Barisic, Donna (90's) & Barry gave this update about their daughters; Natalie (90's) is a nurse at Lake Ridge Health in Oshawa and Vanessa (90's) is a Radiation Therapist at the same hospital. She credits their interest to the Oconto Health Centre influence.

Black, Amanda (90's) and Sheldon Butt celebrated Christmas in Edmonton with their daughter, Jocelyn who was born on Labour Day in 2006!

Bocking, Jen (90's) was married in September last year to Ben Bolden. They are expecting their first child on November 9th! They've moved to Victoria this past summer and Ben is working at the university teaching Music education in the Faculty of education.....We've held the Echo print to include this update from Jen

"Maximilian (Max) Batchelor Bocking Bolden was born the evening of Tuesday, October 30th at 6:26 weighing in at 6.8 lbs., and 19.5 inches!"

CONGRATULATIONS

Boyd, Lesley (70's) attended Oconto for 5 years, starting around 1976! She lives in New Jersey and has 9 year old twins, a boy (Jack) and a daughter (Sarah). Her son, Jack went to Camp Ponacka this past summer and daughter, Sarah is now ready for a similar adventure and of course, Camp Oconto is where she would like to send her!

Burkett, Ali (2000) has finished her undergrad at Queen's in Political Science this Spring, and is excited to be moving to Paris in two weeks to pursue a music career!

Charlton, Andrea (90's) and her husband are back from a two-year stint in London, England, and are expecting not only their first child...but a set of twins! They are due in February. Andrea's last teaching stint was at St. Paul's Cathedral School, which involved lots of time in that gorgeous cathedral.

Corbett, Shannon (90's) is currently living in Toronto, training to be an OB GYN. She graduated from McMaster Medical School and is now in training (five years) before becoming a specialist.

Dawick, Lisa Hudson (80's-90's) Is happy to announce the arrival of her 4th daughter last October - Emily...and she is trying to convince their eldest who will be 7 that she is ready for camp! Also, she ran into Katie Crosbie in Vancouver and has re-connected after almost 20 years! They live just around the corner from each other.

Dulude, Fannie (2000's) has passed on this news about her sister, Marion Dulude. "We are all awaiting her return from a long trip in Africa. She left in September of 2006 for Togo, where she has been living for the past year and half, working for various NGOs in Kpalimé. She is presently traveling through Mali and Burkina Faso before returning home to start Environmental studies at McGill University in January 2008. We can't wait to see her after so long!"

Finlayson, Carolyn Abbass ('88-'94) and her husband Mike Abbass are living in Toronto and have two sons. Robert is 2 and William was born in August. Carolyn works as a public relations consultant and freelances from home.

Giroday, Leslie (60's & '70's) is proud to pass on the following updates about her daughters who are also Oconto alumnae.

Giroday, Gabrielle ('90's) is a journalist with the Winnipeg Free Press. In 2007, she also won a Canadian Association of Journalists fellowship to travel to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to research and write about political and gender equality issues.

Giroday, Genevieve ('90's) is attending the University of Sussex Law School, 2nd year. Last year, she and another student won a number of competitions in Negotiation Skills, culminating in placing second overall in the UK National Championships. She visits often in London, UK with **Jen Withrow**, who is studying post-graduate art conservation at the Courtauld Institute of Art (the top-rated school of art history and conservation in the world).

Goodbrand, Anne (90's-2005) is a practicing Radiation Therapist at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto.

Grundy, Gail (70's) lives in Markham, Ontario with her two teenage sons, Kevin, 16 and Scott, 14. She works fulltime in Markham, in the office of a home renovation company. "Working fulltime outside the home and managing the home front of our teenagers keeps me busy. Our boys are involved in our Markham Hockey, Lacrosse and Swimming programs. In our spare time, we ski/snowboard; spend vacations at Fern Resort, occasionally Florida and camp occasionally on Georgian Bay. When our sons were younger we attended Oonto Family camp which influenced our sons to attend our Markham Day camps. Both boys are wishing to become counsellors at Camp Chimo in Markham. I found my parents and Camp Oonto has been my biggest influence in raising our sons. I have the "Salutation to the Dawn" posted to our Refrigerator."

Hensen, Elizabeth ('77) writes; "Here is a photo of me taken this year on a lovely summer day, doing what I love most. I spend most summer weekends sailing with the Falcon Yacht Club, and am learning more about the sport every day. My other love is scientific research, and I work as a research associate and lab manager at Cancer Care Manitoba, doing research in a field that is very important to me.

Hogg, Mary (60's) hosted a wonderful luncheon in June '07 for many alumnae including; Peggy Keyes Kelly, Bev Keith, Sharon Fritz Roth, Jane Simonet Kline, Lisa Labbett Wilson, Sandra Buzza Atkinson, and Cliff Labbett (as pictured).

Jurisevic, Jenn (2000's)Jenn applied to teacher's college and of the eight schools that she applied to, seven offered her acceptance! She chose Nipissing University so North Bay is home for now. First, she went off to globetrot around Europe for the summer!

She attributes all these acceptances to her time spent at Oonto and kindly wrote the following. "*It was a very beneficial time in my life and it has aided me in my future. Even as a counsellor, I gained so much confidence in myself and learned a lot about group dynamics. It has, by far, been the best and most fun job I've ever had to date.*"

Keilty, Julia (90's) has moved to Vancouver after living in Los Angeles for two years, where she is an actress.

Kennedy, June Labbett (50's-70's) A photo of June 'parasailing' in March '07. Please note the device in her ear – this should be an ad for 'Active Living'.

Langford, Jane (90's) has the following updates on her alumnae friends; **Sue Ten Brummeler** gave birth to a baby boy in May 2007, **Suzie McMeans** gave birth to a baby girl in the spring of 2006 and **Heather Secord**, who lives in Calgary, is engaged to be married to Brad White.

MacDonald, Signe Scammell (90's) Signe was married to Brian Scammell October 2007 in Toronto. The wedding was attended by many alumnae including; Amanda Black, Megan McDonell, Jane Mary Bannigan, Victoria Huntley, Heather Zimcik, Sarah Keenleyside, Leslie Wilson. Melissa Gray was planning to attend but had to cancel.

MacInnis, Heather (90's) & family welcome their third boy, named Ryder in March!

MacLeod, Marsha (90's) and Marco had another baby boy on Canada Day! He was 7lbs, 4 ounces and his name is EVAN MAREK MacLeod van Zuilen. Older brother COHEN JOSEPH was born April 3rd of 2005 and is now 2 and a half....oh the "trying twos". She is on leave until next

September from teaching music and grade 3 in Stratford.

Mann, Heather Haigh (90's) On March 22, 2007 two new members joined the Haigh hockey team. Liam and Roan arrived at 8:41 and 8:42 a.m. weighing 7 lb. 5 oz. and 5 lb. 15 oz. respectively. Big brother Aidan cannot wait to show them how to do everything. Jason and Heather (nee Mann) are ecstatic to have three boys, but now have the dilemma of picking out a boy's camp!

Morris, Susan (70's) was finally able to bring a little Oconto paddle to her waterfront home in Boothby Harbour, Maine, thanks to Lisa Moore and Lisa L. Wilson who coordinated a new one for her during a pub reunion. The original paddles she received at the 2004 camp reunion never made it to Boothby as they were confiscated at the airport and seized as dangerous weapons. This time Susan drove the little paddle home for safety.

Susan adds: "Do you ever notice that your friends like to wear Oconto gear? My favourite is the grey staff sweat top I wear biking to work. Meredith Jackson (Donohue) wears her grey vest walking her dog Asta, and Susan likes to wear her black leather jacket driving across the border. Interesting that out of all the clothes that we own and/or can choose from, we like to wear our Oconto gear."

O'Donnell, Beth Parry (70's) has now moved from Geneva to Basel Switzerland and bought a house there. She works at Roche and her daughters are doing well; Meghan is doing her 3rd year of University in Barcelona and Claire is now in grade 10, both Oconto alumnae.

Palermo, Liz (90's) recently became engaged to fiancé Rob Cowan and they are getting married in July of next year!

Pateras-Jackson, Linda (70's) Says hello from south of the border!! She and her husband are raising 3 children in the suburbs of Chicago. Daughter Kat is a Freshman at Drake University, son Taylor is a high school senior, and son Conrad is an 8th grader. Years go by quickly but Oconto and all the fond memories never fade. Her daughter went to Oconto for 3 years but now her summers are spent working.

Poore, Claire Winstanley (90's) and her husband are pleased to announce the arrival of their second child, Deacon, on June 18th, 2007. Big Sister, Caileigh, and Daddy are thrilled. So is "Aunt" Lisa Thomson (also an Oconto alumnae).

The Oconto tradition continues to second generations:

Rourkes, Maureen & Jacquie's daughters came to Oconto this summer.

Megan Rolland, daughter of **Mary Langford Rolland**, was Chips Section Head this past summer! Daughter **Alexandra** was a semi. Sarah Langford Kyle's two daughters, **Caileigh & Rhiannon Kyle** were Senior and Eagles campers, respectively.

Ryan, Jenny (90's) is engaged. The date is set for an Ottawa wedding, October 2008! The planning is well on it's way, but still a million and one things to do. SO many things to think about! But it's been fun so far. She also landed a permanent teaching job in the Ottawa public board, teaching Junior Kindergarten. She has 20 kids- all to herself, and let me tell you...they are BUSY!

Schwob, Elinor (70's) other alumnae who finds it great to re-connect with alumnae through Facebook - there are about 4 Oconto groups, and she is happy to have reconnected with Keely Abbott.

Keeping in touch!

Schulenburg, Julie Munro ('80's/90's) was married on June 2, 2007 in Brighton Ontario to Clinton Munro.

Shandling, Alexandra ('80's) Alexandra and her husband, Richard Gratton have just had a baby boy, Felix, in June - a little brother for 4-year old Elizabeth.

Stephanson, Erica ('86 - '96) is pleased to announce that Oscar Henry Hart (born November 17, 2001) is now a big brother to Greta Anwen Hart who was born on July 8th at home (water birth) in Cambridge, UK.

Sutherland, Tara (70's) is Head Athletic Therapist at St. Frances Xavier University in Nova Scotia. She wrote, "There have been many times over the years that I have thought about you and Oconto and my many friends there...it is difficult for me to get to Ontario but I keep thinking I have to go visit the camp again some day."

Thacker, Melissa Colonna (90's) was married this past August! On August 18, 2007 she and her husband Daniel Colonna celebrated their wedding with 100 people at an Inn in Middlebury, Vermont (where they both attended university). Oconto girls Cat Dubuc and Carolyn Burns were a big part of the weekend's celebration. Cat flew in from London, England and Carolyn from Edmonton. Mel and her husband Dan live in Connecticut where she is a high school, Chinese teacher and Dan is beginning his medical residency. In 2008, they'll be moving to Seattle, Washington where Dan will continue his residency and she hopes to start graduate studies.

Trotter, Betsy Chalmers (50's) Many campers have come and gone since my summers there, but one point of distinction is that I was there when Lisa came for her first summer at age three months. I also remember the contest to name the new sailboat, '*Brisken*' for Brian, Scott and Kent.

I have a daughter, Kelly who lives in Charlotte, N.C. with her husband and two children.

Early in my relationship with my husband David Chalmers he showed me his Bronze Medallion, which he often carried in his pocket for good luck. He was surprised that I had one too. It was not until later that I admitted to having a Bronze Cross and an Award of Merit as well, thanks to Camp Oconto.

In 1989 we moved to Japan for a two and a half year assignment as members of a team which was there to set up a technical center for the Asia-Pacific division of Procter & Gamble. We retired at the end of the assignment and came to South Carolina. Sadly, David passed away four years ago.

Yuristy, Ana (90's) is getting married! The Engagement photo was taken a few weeks ago at the Toronto Brickworks. The wedding is planned for Sat.Nov.3rd, 2007. Ana and her groom, Christian Friis met at university 8 years ago this November!

Zimcik, Heather (90's) Heather and Shannon Hunt were married June, 2007 at Oconto. The ceremony was in the Chapel, and the reception in the Dining Hall.



Is a wonderful way to keep in touch! However, I feel I need to point out some pitfalls for those of you who are not aware. For those of you who are familiar with Facebook - skip to the next section...

Facebook was started for university students to keep in touch. I have heard many very warm stories of people re-connecting from many years ago. Basically what happens is you create a profile and people ask to be your "friend" and you say yes or no. ANYONE can access your "public" information. ANYTHING that is posted on your Facebook page must be considered PUBLIC information, unless you LIMIT your privacy settings. Be sure that anything that you post on Facebook you would be comfortable having posted on the front of your newspaper!

Please be aware that what you post is visible to the general public. The same goes for what is considered "private" on your Facebook. Unless the owner of the page re-sets the privacy settings once a month - that information becomes public. Once information is on the internet - you can NEVER get it back. I know I sound very negative about Facebook - I have heard some pretty awful stories. So, if you are going to participate, I suggest you do so with caution!

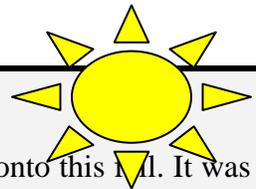
A number of Oconto groups can be found on Facebook – it really is a great way to keep in touch or reconnect. Some people have been posting old pictures of friends at camp etc.

Alexandra Shandling wrote, *“Old Girl Campers should check out FaceBook as there are quite a few different Oconto pages (such as one for campers in the 80’s) that may be of interest.”*

Elinor Schwob wrote, *“There are about 4 Oconto groups, and she is happy to have reconnected with alumnae Keely Abbott through Facebook.”*

Lisa’s note: *“There are many (20) Oconto pages altogether some of our canoe trips from last summer have their own page.”*

MOTHER/DAUGHTER WEEKEND at OCONTO



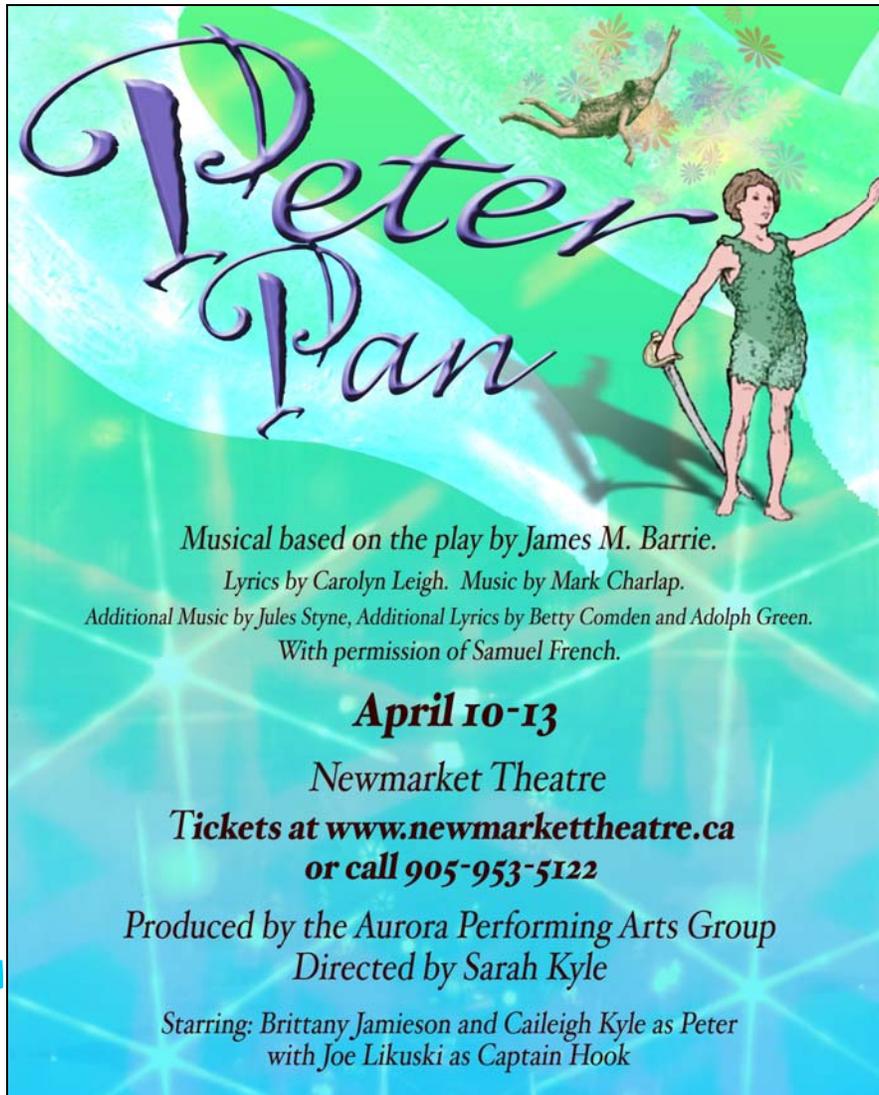
We shared a wonderful weekend with current campers and their moms at Oconto this fall. It was a great success and we will definitely do this again next year. Here are some of the comments that were shared with us.

McGrath, Louise, sister of Janice Mackenzie (90’s) *My daughter, Maddy and I want to thank you SO much for the wonderful weekend!! What a fabulous idea to have a special weekend for moms to spend an incredible few days with their daughters!! I just can’t express enough how much we enjoyed the experience...I wish I was still 8!!! (I was in bed asleep before 8 p.m. Sunday night!! It’s hard work being a kid!)*

I realize the work involved in organizing such a weekend, and we are so appreciative. I heard over and over again from the other moms as well, how much they were all enjoying themselves. You and your staff all exude just warmth and positive energy; I just left feeling so ‘filled up’. It is clear to me what an incredible benefit camp life is to our children...your counsellors are wonderful kids, and I was greatly impressed. Thank you, Fondly, Louise McGrath

Langford, Sarah Kyle (80's & 90's) – Director of the production of Peter Pan (Aurora Performing Arts Group) is proud to announce that her daughters, **Caleigh and Rhiannon Kyle** as well as another Oconto-ite, **Brianna Fife** will perform in this production April 10 -13.

AURORA
907-202-7070

A poster for the musical Peter Pan. The title 'Peter Pan' is written in a large, purple, cursive font. To the right, a young boy in a green tunic stands holding a sword, with a shadow cast behind him. Above him, a boy is shown flying through the air. The background is a bright, glowing green and blue with starburst patterns.

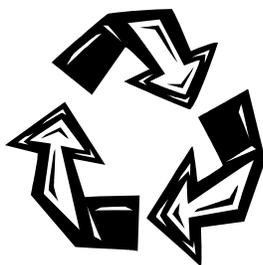
Musical based on the play by James M. Barrie.
Lyrics by Carolyn Leigh. Music by Mark Charlap.
Additional Music by Jules Styne, Additional Lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green.
With permission of Samuel French.

April 10-13
Newmarket Theatre
Tickets at www.newmarkettheatre.ca
or call 905-953-5122

Produced by the Aurora Performing Arts Group
Directed by Sarah Kyle

Starring: Brittany Jamieson and Caleigh Kyle as Peter
with Joe Likuski as Captain Hook

Caleigh Kyle as *Peter*, Rhiannon Kyle as *Wendy* and Brianna Fife as *Tiger Lily*: performance dates are Friday April 11th 7p.m. , Saturday April 12th 11:00 and 3:30 p.m. and Sunday April 12th 3:30 p.m.



LET'S SAVE PAPER!!! The Echo is posted on our website for your viewing convenience. If you would prefer to be notified by E-mail (directing you to the Alumnae section of the website) when a new issue of the Echo is posted, together we will help the environment! Please help us by sending us your e-mail address to oconto@bellnet.ca.

ALUMNAE PHOTO GALLERY



Ana and Christian



The Poore Family



**Aidan, Liam & Roan
Haigh**



Ben and Maximilian



William and Robert Abbass



Zoe, Finley & Estelle Alsop



Elizabeth Hensen



June Kennedy Labbett



Lunch with Mary Hogg

Peggy Keyes Kelly,
Bev Keith,
Sharon Fritz Roth,
Jane Simonet Kline,
Lisa Labbett Wilson,
Sandra Buzza Atkinson,
and Cliff Labbett
(as pictured).

The Oconto Campership Fund depends on your financial help!
Please send donations to: THE OCONTO CAMPSHIP FUND
c/o Cliff Labbett, 610 Bullock Drive, Suite 414, Unionville, Ontario L3R 0G1.

Help a kid come to Oconto!

(Tax receipts are issued for all donations over \$10.00)

OCONTO ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION

YOU are the Oconto Alumnae Association and we are always looking for fresh new ideas to improve on what we do. If you are interested in getting involved; contacting alumnae, fundraising and alumnae event planning please contact Michele Nadeau (70's) at 514-639-6166 or by e-mail at nadeau.soubry@sympatico.ca