



THE OCONTO ECHO

THE OFFICIAL CAMP OCONTO ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER • Fall 2008

Director's Note

Dear Alumni,

We enjoyed a great summer at Oconto this year! A little wet but most of the storms were at night or miraculously during meals. We literally walked in to a few meals dry, noticed it was pouring rain, sang a few songs (including Singing in the Rain!), and then the sky would clear in time for us to leave the Dining Hall and carry on with a great day!

The popular activities were definitely on the water – kayaking, sailing, and windsurfing were high on everyone's list. Our swim staff did a great job with lessons, but were challenged by the weather! The monther plays were Mulan and Pocahontas, both of which were done extremely well. The dances, the singing, the acting... the girls really enjoyed themselves, boosted their ever-important self-esteem, and learned about Drama!

You know, I was asked the other night if we still play Capture the flag. Of course we do!

Iroquois won the Nation Shield in both July and August!

A new addition this year was a white inflatable iceberg to climb on and slide off of in the water. It is "parked" right off main dock and was great fun for both campers and staff!

We are continuing to improve Oconto and have plans through the winter to make repairs and buy some new equipment. We are seriously looking into a climbing wall and might add golf as an activity!

We are looking forward to some great reunion celebrations and hope you will join us in April at the luncheon in Toronto, and at camp in September!

*Hope to see you at the Reunions!
Lisa.*

Oconto's 85th Reunions in 2009 --- Mark the dates!

Sunday April 19th, a brunch here in Toronto – Mark the date, details will follow!
Weekend at Oconto, Friday September 18th to Sunday September 20th.

***We need people to help with the Brunch and weekend. Please contact Lisa if you can help, 905.470.2030 or you can email her at lisa@campoconto.com. Jobs will include things like, helping to plan for paraphernalia, planning the program, leading the sing song, etc. The most important part? Getting the word out to as many alumni as possible...Please be sure that all your friends know about the reunions!**



Jenn Sisk Krueger with children Katherine (3 months) and Jack (2 1/2)

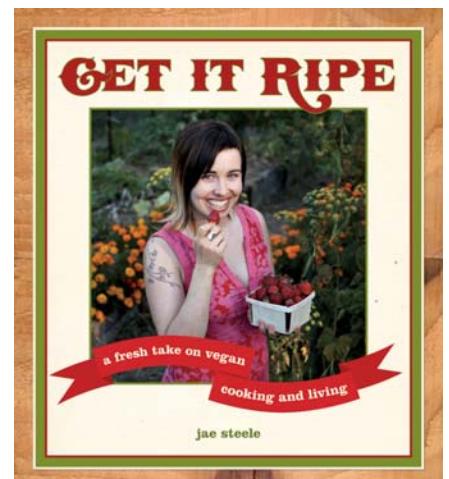


Now and Then... Sue Holbrook and Jen Andreoli in 2005 and the 70's



The Oconto Iceberg!

Brown Eyed Susans, Oconto's original emblem, still grow wild up at camp



Jesse Steele's new cookbook

Please help us to promote camping in general, and specifically Oconto.

Oconto had been a highlight in the lives of many women, and continues to be a large influence on many girls and women today.

This is true of most camps!

At an international camping congress held in Quebec City in early October, we heard many camp directors and speakers talk about the fact that the influence of camp is very strong. The faster life gets...the more sense camp makes!

We have all heard of children spending too much time in front of the T.V., on the computer, and playing video games; these are all forms of entertainment that do not engage people with others. Children need interaction, they need play, and they need contact with other people.

When I say play I mean unstructured, imaginative, exploratory play. Sure, a lot of activities at camp are structured for safety, but there is a lot left to the imagination. Time to learn to canoe, or sail, but more importantly, learning how to spend time in a canoe.

"Play in natural settings seems to offer special benefits. For one, children are more physically active when they are outside – a boon at a time of sedentary lifestyles and epidemic overweight." According to Howard Franklin M.D., new director of the CDC's National Centre for Environmental Health.

To quote Richard Louv in his book Lost Child in the Woods Saving our children from nature – deficit disorder.

"But what about children's emotional health? Although heart disease and other negative effects of their physical inactivity, usually take decades to develop, another result of the sedentary life is more readily documented: Kids get depressed."

Nature is often overlooked as a healing balm for the emotional hardships in a child's life. You'll likely never see a slick commercial for nature therapy, as you do for the latest antidepressant pharmaceuticals. But parents, educators, and health care workers need to know what a useful antidote to emotional and physical stress nature can be. Especially now.

So, even in the tough economic times...

Nature, unstructured play, independence, and opportunities to build self confidence. We have it all.

Please help us to encourage parents to send their children to camp. The benefits are huge, and life-lasting. Please help us to promote Oconto by giving people our website, www.campoconto.com. And also giving them details on our information evenings listed here.

Oconto Slide Show / Information Evenings

We need your help in spreading "the good word" about Oconto. If you know anyone who is thinking of camps, or has a daughter to send...

KINGSTON • March 2nd, 2009 • 7:00pm • Please call for details

MONTREAL • There will be one in January and one in February • Please call for details

OTTAWA • March 3rd, 2009 • Dovercourt Rec. Centre • 411 Dovercourt Ave. • 7:15pm

PETERBOROUGH • April 6th, 2009 • 7:00pm • Please call for details

TORONTO • January 15th, 2009 • Botanical Garden • 777 Laurence Ave. E. • 7:00pm

TORONTO • February 2nd, 2009 • Botanical Garden • 777 Laurence Ave. E. • 7:00pm

TORONTO • April 13th, 2009 • Botanical Garden • 777 Laurence Ave. E. • 7:00pm

A letter about Oconto sent in Spring 2008:

Dear Lisa,

It was great to see you at the Camp Oconto information night last week. Hailey is already so excited about returning to camp again this summer!

As I mentioned to you briefly, I really wanted to compliment you on the wonderful counsellors you have on staff. They were all such positive, confident, and mature young women - each in their own way - who act as outstanding role models for our girls, much as you have done for many of them over the years.

My impressions of your "stellar" team were gained in several ways over last summer. First impressions came through Hailey's enthusiastic feedback after camp last year. She described her counsellor as one of the, "funniest people ever, really nice, and comforting as well". Then I read the letter that came home with Hailey, written by her counsellor, with input from her Semi, whom she described as "really, really funny, and always ready to play with us". The letter was really helpful in giving us a window on Hailey as a "camper", and insight into how she adjusted and grew with her first experience at Camp Oconto. It was extremely well written, detailed, and showed a lot of maturity on the part of the counsellors. They clearly show great interest, concern, and attention to the girls "under their wing". My husband, Jay, and I really appreciated that letter!

And finally, Hailey and I had the great pleasure of attending the Mother-Daughter Weekend in September. I am so glad we went together; it was an amazing time for all of us who were there, for so many reasons. You, Lisa, were wonderful - so welcoming, warm, and energetic!! (When did you sleep??) From the fist campfire and singsong (complete with 'smores!), through archery, tennis, canoeing, charades, and crafts to the last sunny hike, it was fantastic; I am so glad I got to share a bit of camp with Hailey and with all that were there. And the staff members who so generously gave of their time were outstanding. They each brought such energy, warmth, maturity, and a sense of fun to everything we (and they) did! You can clearly see the attention and sensitivity they put into ensuring each and every girl has a positive and enriching experience at Camp. It is wonderful to know that as you send your daughter (in our case only child!) off for a camp experience.

Lisa, I truly want to thank you for your incredible commitment to the benefits of the "camp experience" for girls in particular. As an Oconto alumnus, I do know a bit about the Camp Oconto magic (after being cast in Mary Poppins, I am still surprised I am not on Broadway!). And for Hailey, I see her enthusiasm and sense of pride in belonging to a community of wonderful, positive and strong young women. As Camp, Hailey was encouraged to stretch and challenge herself; she tried many new things for the first time, and really found her "stride" as an independent person away from her family for the first time.

I am very proud of Hailey; and Jay and I are very grateful to you and your family for your enduring and evolving vision for Camp Oconto. It is this investment you make that yields tremendous return for us all. It is a truly special place.

Have a wonderful summer! We'll see you at this year's Mother-Daughter Weekend in September!

With warmest thanks,

Christine (McLarty) Crossman
(Camp Oconto Alumnus circa 1974)

Dear Oconto

This is for all my camp girls still stuck at camp,
You mosquito bitten, and your towels are damp,
My pool is heated, and my shower is clean,
No duty counsellors wake me, and I continue to dream,
But I wish I was there.

I wish I could swim in that cold green lake,
I wish I could have one more crumb of my bronze cross cake,
I drool as I think of chicken burgers,
My silent meals here are driving me berserkers,
I wish I were there.

Campfire calls for me, and Sunday Evening Concert screams,
Visions of possible acts haunt my dreams,
Camp songs sound strange with only one voice,
But at this point I don't really have a choice,
I wish I were there.

I wish for the sunburn and the bug bites,
I wish to see friends and tent hop all night,
I wish to make a circle and sing taps once more,
And, more than anything I've wished before,
I wish I were there.

Nine years may seem long, but to me, never enough,
I always knew writing this letter would be tough,
I'm jealous of your sisterhood,
Those bonds that will never break,
I'm jealous of the friends and bracelets you'll make,
I wish I were there.

As Oconto alumni, let me leave you with some words,
Take them, leave them, or feed them to the birds,
Sing your loudest for every song and cheer,
And when it comes to being crazy, have no fears,
I wish I were there.

By Sarah Bouzanis (2008 was her last year as a camper)

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!

Brown, Morgan (current Oconto staff member), daughter of **Airlie Armstrong Brown (70's)**, is participating in the Class Afloat program. She is taking first year university classes while sailing, literally, around the world. Check out her trip at www.morgansails.blogspot.com

Burtenshaw, Sally (90's) has a PhD in molecular physics from the University of Guelph. She recently worked in a lab where **Steph Kirk (80's, 90's)** [daughter of **Di Lovell (70's)**] was a member.

Carnovale, Catherine (90's, 00's) has been living in New York for the past three years and just recently graduated from Columbia University with a master of Fine Arts Degree in Film Production. Catherine sent us some fabulous Hairspray costumes this summer. They were used often for a lot of laughs.

Daly, Colleen (00's) has just started her first year of Medical school at the University of Ottawa; she looks forward to one day being able to be a camp doctor at Oconto!

Henry, Gwen (60's, 70's) is happily married to a commerce guy she met at Queen's in 1973! They have a great athletic son who is 26 years old! Unfortunately no daughters to send to Oconto! Her mother was a camper when Miss Halliday ran the camp.

Hood, Kelly (80's, 90's, 00's) got engaged on August 10th to Cam Walls. They were hiking just outside Vancouver when Cam

proposed at the top of West Lion Mountain. No wedding date has been decided, because they just moved to Zurich, Switzerland and want to wait until they are settled there to start planning.

Hunter, Jennie (80's) and her husband, Gary Giuffrida, are excited to announce the birth of their first child. Maximus Giuffrida was born on September 4th at 1:44 in the morning. He weighed 7 pound 13 ounces and was 20.5 inches long.

Koehn, Danielle (90's, 00's) graduated from Queen's in the spring and is now in her first year of Law School at Western.

Langford, Jane (80's, 90's) and Blair Freedman welcome Henry Alexander Elias Freedman, born Sunday October 26th at MSH, weighing in at 9 pounds, 8 ounces! Henry is named after his two Great Grandfathers, the late Elias Kawaja & the late Henry Langford, and his Grandfather, Alexander Langford.

MacDonald, Kate (90's, 00's) has just begun her first year of Law School at the University of Toronto.

McKee, Allison (80's) is a Kindergarten teacher in Ottawa (never really left Tads) and is married with 1 son. He went off to camp this summer with Scouts this year. She wishes he was a girl so she could send him off to Oconto!

Mitchell, Sky (90's, 00's) successfully completed her bike trip across Canada, including a pit stop into Camp Oconto at the end of July. Sky biked across Canada to raise money for the Children's Wish Foundation.

Owens, Brittany (90's, 00's) graduated with a Commerce degree from Queen's University in the spring and is now working as an accountant for PricewaterhouseCoopers in Toronto.

Secord, Heather (90's) is getting married in October to Brad White in Canmore, Alberta.

Sisk Krueger, Jenn (90's) is thrilled to announce the birth of her daughter, Katherine Krueger, on July 18th. Katherine joins older brother Jack, who is now 2 ½.

Steele, Jesse (90's), who is now a holistic nutritionist in Toronto, has just published her first book! It's a cookbook and health resource called *Get It Ripe: A Fresh Take on Vegan Living* and became available in bookstores everywhere as of June 2008.

Stephanson, Alex and Erika (90's) of Belleville were speaking about life experiences with their mom over the summer...Barbara Stephanson says,

"Alex and Erika both went to independent schools, we took them on great trips, Alex went to Italy for part of high school, Erika went to England for University, but they both say the best thing we ever did as parents for them was to send them to an all girls camp. Oconto was the biggest single influence on who they are today." Erika is still living abroad. Alex is living back in Belleville with her baby son Quentin and working as a professional photographer. She and Quentin were up at Oconto for a week during summer to take some photos for us.

Willis, Val (30's, 40's) is now 87 years old and proud to be still golfing and cross country skiing. She has been giving tours of the National Gallery for the last 21 years. Val's daughter Kendra passed away due to cancer in 2003, and while going through her belongings she found a book about horses written by Kendra when she was 11. Val spent a great deal of time pairing the childhood book with photos of Kendra riding and getting it published. She has used the proceeds from sales to donate \$10,000 to the Cancer Society and \$12,000 to the Almonte Hospital.

Wright, Nancy (50's) is a retired elementary school teacher now living in Campbellford, Ontario with her husband of 36 years. She sent the following email in us in August...Hello! My older sister, **Susan**, and my twin **Barbara**, were campers back in the 50's. I hold many great memories of camp, including visits from our father, Arthur Wright, who would fly up in his float plane. For me, the best parts of camp were the horseback riding lessons. I also remember the outdoor Sunday church services. Also, I went to school with Lisa in Toronto. My sister Susan, and I attended a weekend reunion YEARS ago (almost 30), and I wear my Oconto sweatshirt at the cottage. A couple of years ago, whilst lunching with a friend in Markham, I discovered that our young waitress had been a counsellor at Oconto for a few years. This prompted me to Google and rediscover Camp Oconto. Warmest Regards, Nancy Wright-DeKuyper

Yuristy, Ana (90's) and Christian Friis were happily married on Saturday November 3rd, 2007.



Oconto Paddles will be exhibiting at Farmhouse Pottery

Saturday November 29th and Sunday November 30th – 9:00am to 5:00pm will be the opening of a new exhibit, on display until Christmas. Oconto paddles will be on display and for sale. Solid maple, bird's eye maple...beautiful "useable art" Lisa and Bruce will be there and would love to see you!

The studio is owned by Al Pace, a potter; checkout his website (pacepottery.com) to see some of his art. He makes beautiful potted dishes, vases, and canoes!

Vicki Carruthers, who started the Special Arts program at Oconto, will be exhibiting her beautiful, bold coloured paintings.

Farmhouse Pottery is located 3 kilometres east of highway 10, on Hockley Road, just north of Orangeville. A spectacular setting, log house and studio tucked under a hill beside a rapid of the Nottawasaga River

Christmas shopping anyone?

To keep in your wallet and give to camp friends when you see them...

Oconto 85th Reunion Celebrations 2009

Please register as an alumnus if you are not receiving the Echo.

www.campoconto.com

Plan on attending the celebrations....

April 19th – luncheon in Toronto

September 18th to 20th – weekend at camp

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