

OCONTO ECHO

FALL 2015

A Message From Lisa

Oconto 2015 was a very successful and busy year!

Our work camp crew arrived early May and did an amazing job getting camp ready for the campers arrival on June 29th.

We had a busy summer with several Algonquin trips including two QC Algonquin trips, two fun-filled Chickadee sessions, and wonderful weather.

We had several groups in the spring and fall- both elementary and high schools, including Turnbull Learning Centre, Ottawa, and Leahurst College, Kingston. Our Queen's group of Kinesiology students included four years of students and a fabulous program. We also hosted the Ontario Womyn's Drumming group, you can't help but bounce when you walk ☺ And first-time attendees were the Schools of String Instruments from Guelph, Kingston, and Montreal- yes It sounded like a symphony all weekend ☺

We are busy with registrations for 2016. Staff hiring has started, and it looks like it is going to be a great year!



We are losing touch!

We are losing contact with alumnae, and need your help! Please send an e-mail to all of your contacts who went to Oconto asking them if they just received The Echo. If they did not, please direct them to the Oconto website and tell them to register with their current e-mail address. We appreciate your help keeping the Oconto community connected!

Oconto Campership Fund

The Board meets twice a year- November and April, to make our fund work. As a reminder the fund supports two or three campers per year, with the following mandate:

Campers of alumnae, or campers who have been at Oconto for a while are sponsored due to financial hardship due to parents job loss, illness, or other difficulties.

Typically, funding is for 2 to 3 years to get a family through the toughest times until they are on their feet again.



We have a few members of the Board and would like you to know the current members are:

Leslie Dewart Giroday, Linda Ford Sutherland, Genn Giroday Warren, Sarah Hammond, Beth Heckman Kavanagh, Steph Kirk deWaard, June Labbett, Di Lovell Kirk, Michele Nadeau, Jenn Sisk Krueger, Peg Walker, Bronwyn Wilson Gorsline, Bruce Wilson and Lisa Labbett Wilson

Thank you to the Oconto Campership Fund Board members for their on-going support.

Thank you to Laurie Thomson, Andy Chisolm, and family for their very generous gift to the Oconto Campership Fund



We are getting a new website!

We will be launching a new website before Christmas! Please be sure to check it out and spread the word!

Please don't forget to follow us on Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/campoconto> and Instagram @CampOconto

Alumnae Updates

Shelly Wellwood was recently involved in planning a Christmas parade for her cousin, Evan Leversage, who is battling childhood cancer. News of the parade, known as Christmas in St. George, gained worldwide attention, spreading awareness of childhood cancer.

She is also teaching grade four and five Core French.

Victoria Huntley married Jonathan Ronkai on September 6th, 2014 and they welcomed their son, Charlie Gordon Ronkai on July 5th, 2015, 6lbs 8oz. Vic and her little future sailor are doing well and loving family life on the west coast.



Steph (Kirk) deWaard and her husband, Jeremy, welcomed their second son, Bennett Kirk deWaard on May 7th, 2015, 8lbs 7oz. Steph is enjoying a busy maternity leave shared with Benn's big brother, Weston, who turned two in August.



Pictured: Steph, Vic Huntley and their boys having a pajama party together

Trish Magwood is working on an exciting new venture FEAST (eatfeast.com) – it is a healthy food delivery company hot to your door at work or at home, based in Toronto. Daughter Olivia (10) is going into her 3rd year at camp and Charlotte (7) will be going this year for the first time while son Fin (12) is loving Kilcoo.

Signe McDonald -

The Scammell Family is happy to be back in Calgary after living in Virginia for 4 years. Jack (5yrs) and Charlie (3.5yrs) are excited for all things Star Wars this Christmas! The boys have grown accustomed to "Taps" as I sing it to them every night before bed - proud to say they can sing along now too! I've been lucky to catch up with Katie Emond for dinner a couple of times and even hosted Mel Hamilton and her daughter Vivienne for a sleep over while she was out West visiting her sister! Wishing my best this holiday season to my extended Oconto Family.
xo Signe (McDonald) 1986-2001



September Kuromi (Weir) lives in Kamloops BC with her husband Mike and 3 kids (ages 6, 8 and 14). She has her own consulting business called Social Fire. She also recently coordinated the annual Kamloops Timeraiser, which is a silent art auction where the currency is volunteer hours - you can learn more at <http://Kamloops.timeraiser.ca>.

The family loves the interior of BC where September is able to ride her horse, an ex-racehorse, as much as she can. She is looking forward to competing her in some beginner Horse Trials next year. The whole family are avid skiers at their 'home hill' is Sun Peaks, and also love to dirtbike as well.

Erin Cook, husband Steve, and big sister Leia welcomed Hailey Grace on May 7th at 7lbs 7oz. Leia is now 3 years old and Hailey 6 months. Hailey already thinks Leia is hilarious and Erin can tell the two of them will be trouble in the next few years!



Laura Davis-Cook, Erin Cook, and Allison (Cook) Singh-

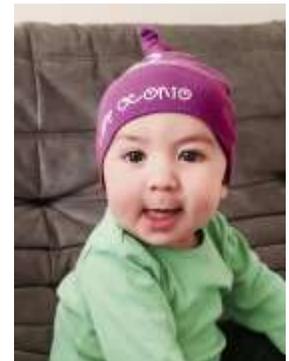
In other Cook family news, Laura Davis-Cook, Erin Cook, and Allison (Cook) Singh will be representing Ontario at the Travelers Curling Club National Championship in Ottawa from November 23-28th. Laura represented Quebec at the Junior Nationals in 1972 and 73 and has been trying to return to a national for over 40 years. She is thrilled to be headed back to a national championship with her two daughters, with her 3rd daughter **Heather** and husband Jim traveling to Ottawa to cheer them on.



Kate Leighton and family are still living in Nova Scotia, where her daughter is now 16. Kate has been working at Walmart for the past 6.5 years, and her daughter has been riding horses for the past 8 years. They have been enjoying living on the East Coast for the past 10 years, but would love to come back to Ontario and visit Camp Oconto

Sister **Mary Liz** is living in Victoria, BC, with her two children and husband. She teaches English Lit at the University of Victoria.

Chloe Dulude (90's) and partner David welcomed a second son, Auguste Clement Moreaux, born on May 13th, 2015 in Montreal. He is adored by his 3-year-old brother Louis, and both are totally spoiled by their wonderful aunties Fannie and Marion.



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Mitch Kelly was recently appointed editor-in-chief of Cottage Life magazine! She is always looking for great cottage stories and would love to hear from alumnae who have cottages stories to share. And, of course, all Oconto alumnae should be subscribing to the magazine, which is really great if she does say so herself! ;)

Linda (Ford) Sutherland welcomed granddaughter Alivia Sutherland, born April 28, 2015 to oldest son Michael. The whole family is having a wonderful time with their new addition.

Erin Mays is excited to announce that she will be getting married to the love of her life, Simon Cain, on December 5th, 2015. She currently sends her daughter to camp and loves the idea of continuing the legacy that helped shape her character, provided her with skills and friends for life and gave her a real relationship with nature.

Sheryl (nee Rogers) Purdy, Victoria Purdy, and Jill Purdy -

I have just returned from a brilliant 'mother/daughter' trip to see our eldest daughter, also Camp Oconto Alumnae, Victoria She graduated with her post graduate studies (Primary Education) from the University of West Scotland 2 1/2 years ago, and has been teaching in Bradford, UK since that time. I had never been to England or Scotland, so I spent 10 days traveling and spending priceless moments with her last month. I am attaching a copy of a picture of the 2 of us at Edinburgh Castle. This was a 'bucket list moment' – I have always dreamed of seeing a castle in person, and it was incredible to experience with our daughter with me.

Jill, our youngest, who is also a Camp Oconto Alumnae is in 3rd year at Brock University taking Kinesiology and loving it! She and my husband, Storm (we will have been married 30 years in March 2016 – cool, eh?).... Also went on a father/daughter trip in October this year...and visited Nova Scotia over thanksgiving. I will also include a photo of the 2 of them at Peggy's Cove. She is the President of Brock's Kinesiology Council and also the trainer for the fencing team at Brock University. She's loving it!

Storm and I have adjusted well to being 'empty nesters' – see picture of Storm putting up the 'Jolly Roger' flag after Jill returned to school again this fall. Too funny! The girls were not amused, of course. hahaha

I am also attaching a picture of the 4 of us taken at a family wedding this summer '15. Is a nice picture of the 4 of us.

All is well...
Hugs,
Sheryl (nee Rogers) Purdy



Kayla Peacock has recently launched her own business. It is called kale ahhh's healthy kitchen and it is essentially a healthy meal delivery service within the GTA (www.kale-ahhh.com).

kale ahhh's
healthy kitchen



Annabel Yarnell- Thistles & Twine Floral Designs is thriving and looking forward to providing Seasonal table arrangements and outdoor planters for all Oconto Alum! Free delivery within the GTA!



Lynne (Wilson) Ryall is still teaching high school- Media Arts, Art and History-now in her 29th year of doing so (even she can't believe it). She and her husband Mark are living in Hamilton. Her daughter Stephanie now 18, is attending Cornell University for chemistry and running for their cross-country and track team.

Lindsay Carruthers was married on September 19th, 2015:

“Diego and I exchanged wedding vows on September 19th. It was the most wonderful day of our lives and we were surrounded by all our family and friends. There wasn't a shortage of laughs, tears, kisses, or drinks! We are excited for our new life together as Mrs and Mrs Di Tolla :)”



Meghan (Deforest) Engbretson was married this year, on August 15th.



Nancy Macdonald is living in North Toronto in the 13th successful year running art studio not just for children www.artstudioforchildren.com. She has two wonderful daughters, Samantha(18) and Charlotte Johnston (20) both attending Queen’s University.



Heather Stuart and her partner, Rachelle, were recently engaged in Central Park, NYC, on November 4th. They are excited to be celebrating with family next year.

Letters from Alumnae

Climate Change my Thoughts , by Kathleen (McCombe) Vanderlinden, November 2015

First point I should make is, I am very involved in the eradication of climate change. I have attended a few events on wind power, solar energy and wind power. I believe and have faith that we can make changes happen. I look at life as the glass is half full, not empty. If we all work together, we can make change in a positive way.

I was down and quite discouraged with the climate changes happening. What is wrong with the world letting this happen and what to do about it? Three years or so ago, my family (even the dog), went out west and also drove through the USA. I could not get over how in Wyoming, (I think it was in Wyoming) I saw a very large wind turbines. I was so happy to see that. What I was not thrilled about, was that the USA still uses coal and it was very disturbing to me. It's as if, they can not seem to learn anything from each other. Then we drove in Alberta and saw more large wind turbines in the fields. I was rather upset when we went to Jasper, Alberta, I the biggest change was evident there. The Glaciers are drying up and disrupts nature's way of life.

This leads to extinction such as the polar bear. What can we do?

When I came Back to Waterloo, I signed petitions regarding climate change and others of a similar nature. We had three marches of many folks to let the government and the public, know how we must do so thing about climate change and extreme weather will be happening more and more. We are getting a quote on solar panels for our house. It is a large expense; but, it pays for itself by what is saved on hydro. Then in about seven years you will be laughing.

Then a year later we loaded our tent trailer, and headed off to the east coast of Canada. I was thrilled to see in every province, even Ontario, turbines in great swathes of fields and solar on houses, factories, barns, etc. How exciting. Then last night at the talk I went to, I learned how all over the world they are going solar. Finally, the world is changing its view. So good to hear. Please, please think about it. Blessing.



Joey is lonely and can't wait for the campers to return! We are already gearing up for an exciting Summer 2016. Wishing you all a happy holiday season and all the best for the upcoming year.