



THE OCONTO ECHO

THE OFFICIAL CAMP OCONTO ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER • Spring 2008

Director's Note

Dear Alumnae,

We are heading quickly into a new season! Work Camp starts on May 12th, with school groups coming soon after that. Our campers will arrive June 27th. We have a great staff lined up. Looks like a great season is on its way!

Please drop in any say Hi, if you are in the Oconto area in the warm months. If you are coming in the 'cold months' please visit anyway. Trevor and Wally will probably be in the Work Shop making paddles. Be sure to park outside the gate, because if they don't know you are in camp, they might lock you in, but you need to be sure you are not blocking the gate...park to the side.

All the best,

Lisa Labbett Wilson, Camp Director

Alumnae daughters at Oconto this summer – we have 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!

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!

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!

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.

Please check out our website at
www.CampoOconto.com

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

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 weekend. Please contact Lisa if you can help, 905.470.2030 before June 10th or 613.375.6678 during the summer. Or you can email her at lisa@campoconto.com

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Oconto Paddles...Check out
our website
www.ocontopaddles.com.



These are great
wedding, birthday,
or corporate gifts.
They can also be
personalized with
names, dates, and
pictures.



Family Camp weekend run by Michele Nadeau and her husband Reginald Soubry
Friday, September 5th, to Sunday September 7th, 2008.

Mother/Daughter Weekend

Please join us for our 2nd annual mother/daughter weekend this fall! It will be held Friday September 12th to Sunday September 14th, 2008. If you have any questions, or would like to register, please contact us. Before June 10th, at 905.470.2030, after June 10th at 613.375.6678.



Camp Awakening Fundraiser

This event will be held at The
Second City Toronto,
Thursday May 8th, 2008.
There is a silent auction
starting at 7:00pm and
Showtime is at 8:00pm. For
tickets and info call or email
Melinda at the Camp
Awakening office
(416.487.8400,
info@campawakening.com).
Please try to attend and
support Awakening !!!



Keeping in Touch...

Andreoli, Jenn (80's) lives with her partner and little boy in Dominica, and is a chef and restaurateur. She co-owned and was Chef at The Universal Grill in Toronto for about 6 years, when she left for Dominica.

Charlton, Andrea (90's) and her husband Jonathan Willson welcome twins! Katherine Eleanor Sims Willson & William Ross Charlton Willson were born December 14th, 2007.

Clippingdale, Michelle (80's) is happily married, to Joël Lépine, with two children, Tristan, 8 and Sarah, 6. The family loves spending time at their cottage on Eagle Lake and catching glimpses of campers running happily from activity to activity. Michelle looks forward to introducing Sarah to the wonders of Camp Oconto.

Cruess, Steph (80's, 90's, 00's) daughter of **Laurie (Hayhurst) Cruess (60's, 70's)** is engaged to Graeme Goodall. The wedding will be July 15th, 2008

Davidson, Carolyn (80's, 90's) is engaged. Chris and Candy went away skiing in Chamonix, France and he asked her to marry him. They'll be married sometime next winter, although they have yet to set a date.

Gibbon, Laurie Valliant (80's) is now a proud Mom to Jason (born 6/3/04) and Alexandra (born 4/12/06) and is living in Oakville, having moved there last May



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!*

from Milwaukee Wisconsin. Her husband, Jamie Valliant, is National Marketing Manager for GE Medical technologies.

Hamilton, Mel (80's, 90's) is happy to announce the birth of her first child. Bruce Orion Hamilton Porter was born at 1:24am on March 22. Kara Lister was present as her doula as were two midwives and Bruce's dad, Roger. Bruce was born at Roger's mother's house in Belleville (yes, that was the plan). He weighed 6 pounds 13 ounces.

Hogg, Alice Varvarikos (80's) As in these pictures (see the photo page), Anne (her mini-me) is the eldest (6½), William (5½), then Noah (2½) and Kaitlyn (12 months) (Do you know, even Noah knows the words to Christopher Robin, Will likes to hear Taps at bedtime...Anne's favorite is Tender Shepherd and the baby – well, she'll choose something she likes in time.)

Holbrook, Sue (80's) has been living in the UK now since 1980... apart from a very brief spell at York University - 1 year! She hightailed it back to London and went to St Martins School of Art, then worked at Elle Magazine for a few years, until she found herself drawn - quite by accident! - Into the world of children's television production. She worked at the company who are responsible for Bob the Builder, Barney the Dinosaur, Thomas the Tank Engine, etc. for 10 years and then has been freelance for the last 5 years, where she has been working on a show called LazyTown which is made in Iceland! It

involves a lot of good travel, which is great, but she also enjoys being able to work to the beat of her own drum! She married Stuart Emery 3 years ago in Toronto at Hart House Chapel, which was great. They live just outside London in Epping Forest.

Hunter, Jenny (80's, 90's) and her husband Gary are expecting their first child in September. That makes **Marsha McGlashan Hunter (60's)** a grandmother again!

Powell, Anne (80's, 90's) and her husband Greg Rutledge are now proud parents of Ben, aged 2 and Avery Isabelle, born March 8, 2008. Anne recently started a new practice in Obstetrics and Gynecology in Brantford, Ontario and will be returning to work after her maternity leave.

Ritter, Katie (80's, 90's) and her husband Jamey Pender welcome home Matilda ("Tillie") Pender, born February 1st, in Ottawa. She has an older and very proud brother, Fergus (born August 5, 2005). She will be spending August on Eagle Lake at the cottage, but is hoping to take up residence at Oconto in a few years!

Schulenburg, Julie Munro (80's) and Clint Munro were happily married on June 2, 2007 at the Timber House Country Inn Resort of Brighton, Ontario. Julie Schulenburg was a camper from 1985 to 1990 and a camp counsellor in 1992 who was the Head of Archery. Julie and Clint met in October 2004 and were engaged in July 2006. Clint proposed when they were vacationing at Julie's remote family cottage in

Halliburton County. They currently have a house in Brighton and Julie now goes by the name of Julie Munro. Julie has a Master of Science degree from Trent University in Watershed Ecology and is working at Quinte Conservation in Belleville as the Surface Water Specialist.'

Spring, Erin (90's, 00's) is in Teacher's College at Queens. She is doing a placement at a high school in Peterborough. She is staying with Judy (Harrison) Hendry, an Oconto alumnus. Judy and Mary (Bell) Spring attended Oconto together in the 60's and were roommates for 5 years at the University of Waterloo.

Stikeman, Vicky (70's, 80's) is living in Toronto, married to Jay Hudacin. They have a daughter, Clara (almost 5). Vicky works as an Executive Coach with downtown corporate executives and loves her work. Still swimming like mad - and married to a record holder elite swimmer - this wee photo is of each family member winning swimming races at the cottage regatta. Vicky's sister in law is **Katrina Hudacin (80's, 90's)** - now living in Dhaka, Bangladeshi and working for the UN and newly engaged to a great New Zealander.

Theysmeyer, Sally (60's) is the a proud grandmother of Luke Fredrick Theysmeyer and Jessica Katherine Theysmeyer, born December 29th, 2006 and August 21st, 2007, respectively.

Wright, Susan Gibbon (50's) is living in Kingston with her husband Jerry Johnsrude and between them they have 9 grandchildren.

We regret to inform you that **Kathy MacDonald Joyner** died November, 2007. A note of interest...Kathy's great aunt was **Ferna Graham Halliday**, founder of Oconto. Kathy's mom, **Barbara (Halliday) MacDonald**, started going to Oconto in 1925, when she was only 4 years old and stayed with the camp until the late 40's. Kathy and her sisters, Heather and Shelagh, all attended Oconto in the 60's.

The Gift that Keeps on Giving....

My daughters, now 25 and 27, were the third generation in our family to attend Camp Oconto, so when we waved good-bye to the bus that first year, I thought I knew what we were giving them, as we released them into the warm care and safe liberty that is Oconto.

And my hopes for them were fulfilled: They (and we) survived the time apart. New activities were tried and skills mastered. Friendships were formed, tested and a few special ones were found to be oh-so-true. And our "go-to" list of role models expanded to include several wonderful counsellors who bridged the sometimes mystifying waters between girl and womanhood with humour and poise.

But, like a seed planted deep out-of-sight to germinate in the fullness of time, I have come to realize that those first times at camp were only the beginning of the collection of experiences lived and lessons learned at camp. These gradually filled a quiver of characteristics that have served and enriched my daughters' lives ever since, and which I fully expect will do so for the rest of their lives. These attributes were mostly absorbed and transferred over many years of repeated exposure, rather than being directly taught or stated. And, by returning to Oconto through numerous years, these were acquired as each girl became ready to hear/see/feel each opportunity. Sometimes the same notion was learned anew in several different ways, as my daughters returned each summer, having become changed by the passing year.

My two lovely, accomplished and humane daughters are who they are, and do as they do, in part because they learned to believe at Oconto that:

- (1) Each person forms a part of an inter-related permanent whole, and therefore every person matters. A lot.
- (2) It really doesn't matter which designer label is on your clothes, if any...as long as you get the job done.
- (3) Every single task to be done or role to be filled can be accomplished by a female. Bar none.
- (4) Girls DO want to have fun!!!
- (5) There is such a thing as a fresh start.

I remember when my husband and I were trying to decide at what age to first send our girls, and my "mother-bear" self was concerned that it might be too soon ~ it was my (Oconto alumnus) mother who gently but firmly encouraged us to move ahead. And I think that now I see why: she had seen and recognized the "Oconto" effect on my sister and I through our adult years, as well as in our childhood. She knew, and rightly so, that the camp years would plant early seedlings of personal growth - exciting and encouraging to be sure, and with potential clearly written there. But she also knew that the real harvest would come later, sometimes much later, and that it would be all the sweeter and stronger for the wait.

I feel the deepest gratitude to my parents for this irreplaceable lifelong gift, and I am thankful to our daughters for allowing us the chance to experience it all again, through their eyes, and to Miss Halliday, June and Cliff Labbett and Lisa and Bruce Wilson for making sure that Camp Oconto was here for each of us 😊.

Leslie Dewart Giroday

COAST TO COAST

This summer, **Sky Mitchell** (90's, 00's) will be riding her bicycle across Canada to raise money and awareness for the Children's Wish Foundation. The Children's Wish Foundation works with the community to provide children living with high-risk, life threatening illnesses the opportunity to realize their most heartfelt wish. The journey will begin at the beginning of June when Sky will leave Vancouver Island with her support vehicle being driven by **Tory Farr** (90's, 00's) daughter of **Sandy (Scholes) Farr** (70's).

Currently, Sky is the only rider who will be completing the entire 8,000km journey; however, there are other riders who will be joining her for various legs of the ride. Sky has always wanted to ride her bike across Canada and she is thrilled to be dedicating this trip to the Children's Wish Foundation.

Sky's primary sponsor for the ride is the company that she works for, Cadbury Adams. They are the makers of many popular products such as Trident, Dentyne, Stride, Maynards Candy and the infamous Cadbury Chocolates. Sky is currently working on securing additional sponsorship.

More information about the ride can be found at www.crosscanadasky.com. Online donations can also be made on this website. If you have any sponsorship opportunities, please contact Sky at skymitchell@gmail.com or (403) 978-6161. Furthermore, if anyone is interested in joining Sky and Tory for a leg of the ride, please contact Sky to make arrangements. Sky and Tory are looking forward to their journey across the country and will be passing through camp in July.



Photo sent in by Sue Holbrook – who do you recognise?



Julie Schulenburg & Clint Munro



Jay & Clara Hudacin and Vicky Stikeman



Carolyn Davidson and her fiancé Chris



Matt, Anne, & Noah Hogg-Varvarikos



Katie Ritter, Tillie and Fergus Pender



Alice & Kaitlyn Hogg-Varvarikos



Tillie Pender



Kaitlyn Hogg Varvarikos



Fergus Pender (note the Oconto Paddle!)