THE GULL ROCK GAZETTE

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KILCOO'S GREAT CAMPER EXPERIMENT

A CABIN WITH NO COUNSELLOR - BUT DID IT WORK?

If you have read Chief John Latimer's book, Maker of Men, you know of his experiment with the "Super Seniors" of July 1961. I want to tell that story from my memory of that long ago summer which was amazing from the Super Seniors' point of view and not a "failure" as described in Chief's book.

When we arrived at camp that summer we were informed that we would be in a cabin without a counsellor. We were a little surprised, but we realized that this experiment was to offer us the hope that our responsibility and maturity would shine through and we would become good candidates for CIT positions later that summer or the following year: the future leaders at camp.

These future staff candidates were Norm Lord, Russ Skuta, Tom Chown, Jack Richardson, Peter Oyler and me. We were supposed to participate in the same program as other campers, but we were responsible for getting ourselves to the activities on time and participating conscientiously to improve our camping skills. We were also given responsibilities working with other younger cabin groups when we were needed around camp and also supporting these campers on canoe trips.

Now it did not take long for this experiment to become somewhat questionable. Since we didn't have a counsellor (even though we were part of the Senior Section) we did not feel we had to conform with the bedtime for the section, and we didn't, and we didn't feel our camping skills required further refinement either. So, we spent quite a bit of time in our cabin where we amused ourselves with activities that were not necessarily regular programmed activities.

As I recall, there were "lighted" match throwing games (especially at night), Fizzy parties, knife throwing, target practice, broom throwing, smoking and late night wandering: it usually meant we were up very late.

Now, just like falling dominos, other developments occurred. Sometimes breakfast was missed and many daytime activities were not attended. As would happen at camp there were injuries. Norm Lord suffered a foot injury (knife throwing contest) and Tommy Chown's sleeping bag caught fire (lighted match game). Russ Skuta suffered an epileptic seizure probably due to sleep deprivation. In addition, the organ for one Sunday service at Chapel Point didn't work because a broom had successfully hit the bullseye of the power outlet located in our cabin. Other foot injuries, and runs for emergencies happened



and certain campers were caught smoking in the cabin instead of the designated smoking area. Bad language directed toward the swimming staff was common, but all of this we chalked up to youthful exuberance and fun.

We were responsible in some ways. We tended to our duties with other cabin groups most effectively. There was only one instance that I recall in which a cabin mate, while on a canoe trip across the lake, left that group to return to the Super Senior cabin for a scheduled fizzy party, but he was back with the group at their campsite before sun up, so it really was no big deal, right!?

There were many detractors of this experiment among the instructors, senior staff and counsellors which probably influenced Chief. Consequently, Chief added a counsellor to supervise our cabin for August (Dave Linton). The experiment was over.

But, was the experiment a failure or a success? 66% of the Super Seniors subsequently returned as CIT's and counsellors. They also continued on to more responsible positions in the years to follow. Compared to other Senior Section cabin groups this percentage was good, perhaps even great!

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EDITOR'S MUSINGS

In my second year as a camper in July, 1957 I remember the many hot days during which we were instructed to eat salt pills to maintain the electrolyte levels in our systems. And so as I visited camp this summer during the extended heat wave in July I observed how the camp program had been adjusted to ensure campers and staff spent extra time in the lake and drank more water at meals. Salty potato chips were part of noon time meals and once while walking by the lodge I heard Christmas music, all the above measures with campers well being in mind. I have no doubt small propane burners were being used on canoe trips as well.

As always camp was busy and campers were always quick to welcome visitors with introductions and handshakes. The staff was again a young group, hard working, and their efforts made 2018 another successful season made even moreso because Canada won the Kilcoo Olympics. Working with first year LITs I was again very impressed with the maturity of the camp's future leaders. These young people will be integral to Kilcoo's continued success as it appears fewer staff continue to return for quite as many years as they once did.

While still on the "youth theme" I participated in Amici's Canoe Heads again in June and while I was supported by many alumni from the organization's early days, what struck me most was the involvement and enthusiasm of so many young people connected to many more camps than just Kilcoo. Partnering with 42 Ontario camps Amici sponsored 290 children for a camp experience this summer with most of those children being returning campers. I still hearken back to our excitement when we sponsored 5 campers in 1968.

Looking ahead, we have some very exciting news which I hope will be of great interest to all alumni. A project is now under way to create a Kilcoo historical museum. A letter accompanies this issue of the Gazette, which offers many details and I hope we hear from many of you in response. Our next alumni reunion is planned for the weekend of September 25th-27th in 2020 and a highlight will be the museum's grand opening. I have included a picture of the present office/tuck shop here because we are hoping to combine the museum with a rebuilt office/tuckshop.

Waxing philosophically a little, it seems to me that being connected to something or someone is what makes life fulfilling. Hopefully we all experience this connectedness in our lives and where Kilcoo is involved I hope all alumni feel connected in whatever manner you choose. Whether it is merely the receipt of the Gazette twice a year or something more direct: visiting camp on your own or when your own children or grandchildren attend, joining others in the September reunions or perhaps just keeping in touch with a "best" Kilcoo friend. There are so many groups of alumni who connect regularly, be it periodic pub get togethers in Toronto, the April Fools Day luncheons, June golf tournaments, ski trips, Algonquin Park canoe trips or the yearly cottage or camp weekends that draw a number of alumni together. All these activities represent a desire of so many alumni to remain connected to the camp and



their camp friends, and it seems to be one constant that stays with many of us after our days as staff members are over. Some of these activities have been reported in past Gazette issues and I invite any of you to send in your reports, with a picture if possible. This year's April Fools Day luncheon organized by Lindsay Ko and Trevor Pedlar is featured in this issue.

I also draw attention to the advance notice of 2019's Alumni/Daughter weekend planned for September 27th–29th which will be one more "connecting" event.

PAUL CHAMBERLAIN
1956-1967

KILCOO CAMPER EXPERIMENT

... continued from cover

Let me expound further. I am remembering this from 57 years ago so some recollections may be fuzzy. Tom Chown: CIT, counsellor, pro football player, lawyer; Peter Oyler: CIT, counsellor, instructor, teacher, municipal councillor; myself: CIT, counsellor, Assistant waterfront director, teacher. Though Jack Richardson did not return to camp he became successful in business as I assume Russ Skuta and Norm Lord did as well.

It is only supported by memory why any of these campers were selected for future positions at camp and who endorsed them. Many suspect Chief was responsible for seeing something special in all of us who were invited back. Chief gave many young men another chance just as he gave these "Super Seniors" a chance to become "Maker of Men".
While I have lost touch with some of those I mentioned, Peter Oyler and our beleaguered swimming instructor from that year, Bob Slingerland, remain as best friends 57 years later. Rip Ram.

JAMIE MCALPINE
1953-1969

FIRESIDE CHAT

From Lub and the entire Latimer Family

I am writing this note on the day the first fall frost arrived at Kilcoo. There were still five Post Camp Staff up on Gull Lake closing down the camp after a busy fall season; one that included nine school groups, Father/Son Weekend, former Trip Director Russ Gray's wedding and some awesome weather. The last group, St. John's Kilmarnock, from Waterloo, departed on the Friday following Thanksgiving, putting the cap on an awesome fall season. By the time you read this, everyone will have finally left, but it was a great year; we love camp! The office is well under way with registration for next summer and I am now in the process of beginning our staff and LIT hiring process for 2019… it looks like a big return of staff, which is awesome.

We had a wonderful summer, full of highlights like the scorching July weather, the continued dominance of Team Latimer in the Bushpede, the continued millennial success of Team Canada in the Olympics, trips on the Missinabi River and Vancouver Island, and many more. The "upgraded" cabin fans in July were key to keeping everyone in good spirits, along with rest hour swims and evening program swims to cool off. We were very lucky to be able to jump in to Gull Lake whenever we needed it… remember that feeling!?



Kilcoo Olympics photos

It is always nice of alumni to drop by to say hello and it happens a great deal. The alumni highlight of 2018 was the visit of Richard Clarke to talk about the new Kilcoo Museum project (see the accompanying letter). Richard was generous with his time and the kids enjoyed chatting with him about Kilcoo in the "old days." The alumni mean so much to this community and are always welcome with open arms. Once again, Gord McGivern, Dave Hamer and Paul Chamberlain all contributed their time and knowledge to our 2018 Pre-Camp training week; they are fixtures and it is awesome! In September 2019 we will host another Alumni/Daughter Weekend (see Justin Medved's article on page 4) and of course, it is never too early to think about the reunion of 2020 (September 25th to 27th), so put it in the books. For now though, thanks to all the alumni for your continued support of Kilcoo Camp.



Richard Clarke with Cabin 1

2019 will be my 35th year as director and I still love the job as much as I did in 1985! My sons, TJ & Charlie, (who will be first year staff members in 2019 if they are hired) are in Grade 12 at North Toronto, along with my daughter Brooke, who is in Grade 10, so needless to say, the years are flying by! Beth loves all that is Kilcoo, and is a very busy Art Therapist in the downtown neighbourhood of Regent Park. Kim Bouchard remains a constant in the office and is joined by Program Director George Hendrie and Assistant Director Patrick Tingley. Those familiar with Camp Gay Venture may remember "Buzz and Brador", Aldrin & Tanya Primaylon, who have completed their second summers at Kilcoo with their three kids. The leadership group at Kilcoo is in good hands.

I hope everyone has a safe and sound winter season… Thanks all.

RIP RAM RAZZLE SCRAM
DAVID "LUB" LATIMER



ALUMNI/DAUGHTER WEEKEND RETURNS IN 2019!!

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 27th – SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 29th

David and Brooke Latimer are very happy to invite members of the Alumni and their daughters to Kilcoo for the second ever Alumni/Daughter Weekend. The experience promises to be unique and memorable for everyone involved. Please check out www.kilcoo.com for the sign-up form and more information.

FATHER DAUGHTER WEEKEND

For those former Kilcoo staff who are lucky enough to be blessed with only daughters, connecting those offspring back to the magic that is Kilcoo Camp presents an interesting challenge. While many of us have found all girls or coed camp options there is still an unresolved desire to share our experience and love for all things Kilcoo back with our children. There are enough of us out there (Brent Knightly, Geoff Park, Kevin Stewart, Matt Shoom-Kirsch, Willie Macrae to name but a few) that a couple years ago we



lobbied Lub to find a creative solution. It was from conversation that the first annual Father/Daughter weekend was born. This special weekend allowed us to share our stories, favourite activities, cabin signs and songs in a jam packed weekend that has become a "can't miss" event in my calendar. The weekend took on a totally unique vibe as "our girls" soaked in the fall sun and spent the weekend going to camp with their dads. My girls keep asking when the next one will be and I'm excited to announce that a date has been set for the 2nd annual. Like Lub likes to say "If it happens twice.....it's tradition!"

JUSTIN MEDVED
1987-1989

THE MORE APRILS FOOLS THE MERRIER

What more appropriate day to celebrate with like-minded comrades from Kilcoo than April Fools Day? At least that's what four Kilcoo alumni (Lindsay Ko, Ted Pease, Craig Prentice & Trevor Pedler – '60s campers and CITs) thought some dozen or so years ago.

The purpose of this? Simply a nice, casual opportunity to re-acquaint, share stories and once again appreciate all that Kilcoo has given us.



Attendance has slowly grown over the years, as word leaks out, and the event has become richer as more people join and new friends with a common bond are made. The venue is flexible and has changed several times to accommodate the numbers and to make it easy for both in and out-of-towners to attend. You never know when Smoothie or Lub will show up but the odds suggest they will.

The lunch next year will be held once again on or around April 1st and anyone wishing to join us can simply let us know by sending an email to either Lindsay Ko at lindsayko@rogers.com or Trevor Pedler at trevor@pedler.ca.

LINDSAY KO
1963-1969

REMEMBERING HUGH STEWART GAGE (June 26, 1937 - April 9, 2018)

Quite likely it was 1952 when I first met Hugh when we were junior counsellors.

During that summer, Hugh was labelled with the nickname, "Mother Gage". Every evening when the bell at the lodge would summon everyone to dinner all cabin groups would walk in single file led by their counsellors. Although Hugh, at 5 feet tall, was vertically challenged, he was somewhat taller than his campers who followed behind. He stood in stark contrast to Stan Hurwitz who at 6 ft. 7 in. led his campers briskly toward the dining hall. Hugh always looked like a mother duck with her ducklings. Hence the nickname.

Being quite jolly and rotund, Hugh was more suited to archery than canoeing and tripping. He was assigned as the archery instructor and over the summer passed on useful skills to many campers.

After our staff days at Kilcoo Hugh and I lost touch. With Kilcoo's 75th anniversary gathering in Toronto in 2006 we rekindled our friendship and met on further occasions at the camp reunions every three years.

After his days at Kilcoo Hugh went on to complete his education at Kenyon College in Ohio. He graduated in 1959 and for many years prior to his death he was an active alumnus of the college. Although Hugh remained single throughout his life he was not without "family" which both Kilcoo and Kenyon College comprised. Rest in peace old friend.



BRUCE HAINES
1946-1954

A WONDERFUL KILCOO STORY

Amici's credo is "Camp – it's in you for life", and many stories featured in the Gazette revolve around alumni accounts of how camp helped shape their success in life. This biographical sketch from Terence Green answers to both of these and serves as a validation for all of us who remember camp as a positive experience with long reaching effects.

I grew up on 132nd street in Harlem, surrounded by a neighborhood filled with drug houses, rampant crime, and not much leadership within the community. My family life was not so great either; I had a mother who was addicted to drugs, which she later succumbed to. However, she tried her best. I didn't know my biological father, not developing a relationship with him. Before and after my mother died, my maternal grandmother raised me. Due to health issues, she soon passed away and I began to move around with friends of my family. My mother had 13 children, all of whom took different paths in life. Some went down the road of selling drugs and committing crime, while others went on a different path.

In 7th Grade, while I was at the Children's Storefront School, David Latimer, John Latimer, Kevin Way, along with others came to visit the school. In 8th grade, my class was sponsored to come up for a weekend to experience Kilcoo. I enjoyed the experience so much I told Lub I wanted to come up the following summer and was sponsored to attend for the month of July. With the support of close family friends I was able to be a part of Kilcoo Camp from 1995 to 2009.

I began as a camper, and rose through the ranks to LIT, Counsellor, Section Director and LIT Director. I learned to navigate the outdoors, organize and plan, and intervene in medical, behavioural and emotional scenarios. I learned to become a true leader, empowering others to become leaders themselves.



This experience provided me the opportunity to learn leadership skills, responsibility, confidence and to take pride in my work. Kilcoo is truly a "Maker of Men." I had limited male role models in my life and lived in a culture with different values than that which Kilcoo provided me. I was angry about a lot of things in my life and sometimes got myself into trouble with this anger. Kilcoo helped me harness this anger and develop my values to what they are today. My experiences at Kilcoo helped shape the man, husband, father, brother, son, police officer and friend that I am.

Kilcoo was a safe place for me; a place that gave me hope and nurtured me. I made lifelong friends who I consider a part of my family. Through my time at camp, Lub became a father figure and my wife and I had the honor of being married by him in 2014. Kilcoo holds a special place in my heart and I am looking forward to sending my son there in the future.

TERENCE GREEN
1995-2009

KILCOO CAMP IN THE OFF SEASON

Everyone reading this Gazette is familiar with summer images of Kilcoo. Not so familiar are the "OFF-SEASONS". The pictures above display Kilcoo in October and in the too soon to arrive winter season.





THE ALMOST TRAGEDY IN KIPAWA, 1983

Cast your mind back a few years ago to Jeff McDonald's piece about his role in building the world's tallest building in Dubai. In that article he credits me for two things: remembering song lyrics and saving his life. Ever since reading that article, I've thought it would be fun to try to recount the day that I saved his life. Actually, to say I saved his life is a bit grandiose. It would be more truthful to say that I took action that enabled Jeff to save his own life. Either way, it's a decent story…

Kipawa. Quebec July, 1983. Jeff (counsellor) and I (LIT) are on the "two weeker" with a small Cabin 24 (6 campers). It was day 5 or 6 and we had just had a brush with civilization at Hunter's Point Lodge. I recall we each bought a chocolate bar and a pop (Pepsi or Ginger Ale). Our destination that night was a campsite on the far side of Little Birch Lake.

We made a mistake. At a "T" junction we turned right when we should have turned left. A glance at the map (Was it a sidelong glance? Was the map upside down?) showed a clearly visible trail to the right that indicated all was well. It wasn't. The actual portage was out of sight to the left. The trail we ended up on was horrible: one of the muddiest, buggiest portages I've ever been on. After crossing the next lake, we discovered that there was no trail leading out of it. There was, however, a portage clearly visible on the map. Jeff hopped out of his canoe and headed into the woods to look for the trail.

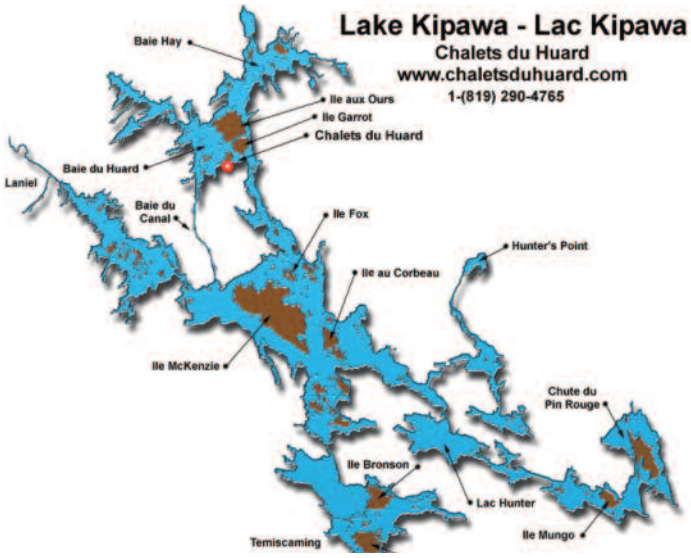
I can't remember how long we waited before I headed into the woods to look for him: not much more than 30 minutes I would guess. It was mid-afternoon and I was being very careful to keep the sun on my right shoulder for 15 minutes of bushwhacking and shouting. Nothing. I kept the sun on my left shoulder for 15 nervous minutes and found my way back to where the boys were waiting. Now it's pushing late afternoon and I was hit hard by the realization that we were in a pretty serious situation. Our leader was gone. I'm the leader now? These kids are only 2 years younger than me!

I made the decision to empty a canoe, take my strongest camper and head for Hunter's Point as fast as possible. The instructions to the rest of the kids were to raft up in the middle of the lake, eat all the PB and J they wanted, and wait.

We were about 2 hours getting back to Hunter's Point. I called the camp and got no answer. Everybody was at dinner. This was not in the script. Making it to the phone was supposed to make this all somebody else's problem. The folks at Hunter's Point were great. They were all ready to head into the bush to help search. Another call to the camp. No answer. Can't wait for direction from HQ any longer. My next call was to Air Kipawa. Within 30 minutes we were airborne. A 17 year old and a 15 year old on a full blown airborne rescue mission!

It didn't take long before we realized our mistake. The look on the pilot's face when I pointed out the area of forest where Jeff had gone missing is something I won't forget. The area Jeff thought he was heading into was around a quarter of an inch of "map space". But it was more like 3-4 inches of green in all directions. Not a good feeling.

The first job was to buzz the kids a couple of times to see if Jeff had made it back. He wasn't there so, we started combing the forest, looking for clearings. We flew over all the lakes that he might have made it to. There was no sign of him and time was rapidly becoming enemy number one. Float planes can't land in the dark. The pilot and I decided that the best thing he could do was take us back to Hunter's Point while he still had enough daylight for three more landings: first to drop us off, second to get the kids moving back across the trail and, finally, back at the Air Kipawa base.



This was bad. Jeff had nothing to help him survive a night out in the woods. He was wearing shoes, shorts and a tee shirt. It's possible he wasn't even wearing socks.

It's tough to describe how it felt to hear Scott Russell say the words, "Good evening, Kilcoo Camp". I filled him in on what had happened and what we'd done. The plan was for us to wait at Hunter's Point while Scott tracked Hal Hannaford down. While I was on the phone with Hal, the plane came back and out stepped Jeff McDonald! - Wet and scuffed but in one piece and happy to be alive.

On his way to let the rest of the group know what was happening, the pilot had seen Jeff wading through water up to his neck to keep the bugs away. Hal asked if we were OK to continue the trip and I responded with something like, "Dude, we have 5 campers sitting in canoes in the middle of an unnamed lake. All good. Gotta go".

So Jeff was OK but now we had a whole new set of problems. The pilot shot his bolt bringing Jeff back and never made it to where the campers were waiting. They had no idea what was going on and they'd been alone in those canoes for over 8 hours!

The paddle back to the campers and the slog across the muddy portage (now in full darkness) were nightmarish and the bugs were voracious. For the remainder of that night, I was feeling "phantom bug bites". The campers were asleep in the canoes, still in the middle of the lake, and it took a bit of shouting to get them moving. Nerves were quite frayed and schlepping all our gear across a mud trail at 1:00am through a swarm of starving mosquitoes was a bit of a slog.

But we made it and then hugged the shoreline until we found a meadow where we could pitch our tents.

Other stories about losing large quantities of food in the Kipawa River, heat exhaustion, and other "exciting" moments will have to wait until another time.

JIM COOK
1975-1985

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS FROM NIGHT PATROL

Having taken turns at Night Patrol while on the camp staff all alumni will be able to identify with Bob Dameron's account below – the good and the bad. It should be noted that present day staff perform this duty until 3a.m.

We all did our share of 11pm-1am Night Patrols. Many were rather boring and most have faded from memory…it was just part of being on staff at Kilcoo.

What is amazing to me is that after almost 40 years since my last night patrol, some hilarious events from a few of them remain in my memory. I'd like to share four here….perhaps you will know some of the people who joined me on these 'adventures'.

Incident #1: Bedwetter Dilemma

Jeff Lloyd and I checked in at Chief's Cabin a few minutes before 11pm to get medication lists/pills and the bedwetter list. It was a long list and so Jeff and I decided to split it up – I took Cabins 1 and 2 and he took 3 and 5. Having finished my cabins without incident, I walked over to Cabin 5 and watched Jeff go in….a minute later he walked out but not with a camper. I asked where the camper was. Jeff in his trademark, dry humour replied very simply, "we were too late…the bed is soaked so I put a life jacket beside him, told his counsellor – he'll be fine"….and off we went to deliver some meds.

Incident #2: Campfire pits after Shore Supper

Part of the Night Patrol check list back in the day included a trip out to PI Point (where the Long House is now). Nine times out of ten, that campfire pit was stone cold – as many people didn't even know it existed. There wasn't a road, just a small path that started behind the Cook's Cabin and went up a steep hill and out to the point. With only a flashlight and memory to guide us – Paul Weale and I ventured out through the forest to find the campfire pit was still warm! Many expletives later, we had to go back and forth with buckets of water, through the woods, in the dark. I never did find out which cabin had cooked their shore supper out there without properly dousing their fire. It would not have been pretty, had I discovered who it was.

Incident #3: Slip Sliding Away

There was thunder, lightning and a rain storm of epic proportions as Al Leal and I checked into Chief's cabin for the lists and special instructions. With full rain gear and umbrellas – we ventured out. The patrol was going well, though slowly, as we approached Sail Cabin and 22 & 23. Occasional lightning lit up the area, but the footing looked sketchy as we went down the hill from Sail to the 22 & 23. There was almost a river coming down the hill from Cabin 24. Al proceeded to 23 and I walked into 22. I looked around and walked out. I took one step onto the rain soaked, slippery incline and felt myself sliding, on my feet and then on my ass, right under the cabin! Umbrella and flashlight went flying in opposite directions and the flashlight went out on impact with the ground. It was now pitch dark, and I had no clear idea of where I was. Al did not see me go flying and sliding, so he had no clue what had happened. I could see his flashlight exit from 23 and so I started calling between thunderclaps. It took us a few moments to connect and eventually I used flashes of lightning to get my bearings and climb out and onto the gangway connecting the cabin door to the hill. Al was laughing hysterically as he shone his flashlight at me and realized what had happened. We located my flashlight and umbrella and continued on, muddy, wet and somewhat sore. In retrospect – it was pretty funny and I feel lucky I didn't suffer a broken ankle or arm.



Incident #4: Rat Patrol Invented – Special Forces deployed

One summer, staff noticed that there was some vandalism happening sometime after night patrol ended. Locks were snapped after night patrol checked that they were secure. Garbage cans were dumped on their sides, and a couple screens were slashed. Clearly, we had intruders coming in after 1am and it was spooking Chief, staff and campers alike. So, a special patrol was instituted – The Rat Patrol. Three teams of 2 would be deployed around camp at 3 points of entrance: main driveway, Plewman's Road and waterfront. There were two shifts: 1-3:30am and 3:30-6am. I drew 3:30-6am with Bob (a.k.a. Smoothie") Slingerland and we were stationed with walkie talkies by the camp office. For 1-1/2 hours it was eerily quiet – occasional chatter on the walkie talkies as the 3 teams checked in with each other and with someone in Chief's cabin. But, at about 5:00am – everything changed! We heard the sound of a car racing down Highway 35 and then come to an abrupt stop, sliding a bit on the gravel, right at the entrance to camp! A door opened and then shut, and the car raced off, it was as if they had dropped someone at the entrance.

We quickly cooked up a plan to ambush whoever was sneaking into camp, assuming they would walk in on the road (brilliant assumption - we thought!). We would split up and go down either side of the road leading into camp and just a few metres into the pine forest, so we wouldn't be seen – flashlights off!

We slowly made our way, in the dark, toward the highway, trying not to bump into the trees, hoping to see the silhouette of an intruder or two. We each had a baseball bat, but we hadn't talked about what to do if we saw someone! We were 80% of the way to the highway and had not seen or heard anything or anyone and then it donned on me – could that car have just dropped Globe & Mail newspapers? I whispered to Smoothie, "Hey Bob – what about Globe & Mail being dropped off?". In a nanosecond he bursts out, "Ahhhh fruit cake, that's exactly what it is – darn it all!" and then his flashlight came on. We laughed our way to the highway and there they were, a couple of newspapers sitting on the ground. I think Rat Patrol went on for another week or so, but no one was ever caught trying to come into camp, so it was stopped.

Do you have any fun stories? I challenge other alumni and staff to recount some fun times they had on night patrol….I'm sure there are some great stories out there!

BOB DAMERON
1966-1978

ACCLIMATIZATION EXPERIENCES IN NATURE LORE

Assuredly we all understand the value of a program to teach campers an appreciation of their natural surroundings. The following account from Bill Bobier describes one aspect of the 1972 Kilcoo Nature Lore program: Acclimatization.

It was the summer of 1972. A cabin group of Pathfinders walks in single file holding a rope. They are walking slowly in a forest at the camp's periphery. They become aware that they are passing out of the sunlight into the shade. Their nature lore instructor asks if they notice this change as they are blindfolded. Then they are carefully seated in a circle around a decaying tree stump by their "seeing" instructor. As their hands are guided onto the stump they start to feel the damp of decay, the sponginess of a fungus, and for some, the creep of an insect up their arms. Then their blindfolds are removed. They realize that they have walked from a sunny birch forest to a darker one of tall pines and that they have felt the process of the decomposition of a fallen tree. This "experience" sets up the discussion led by the instructor about how a forest matures where the tall pines "shade out" the birch which fall and decay providing the necessary nutrients for the forest.

Later that week a Norwester cabin group crossed the highway with either Geoff Vernon or Drew Danniels. They were taken on a path through tall grass which gradually became damp underfoot. Soon their sneakers were under water. They were on the edge of a bog. This did not surprise them. They were after all, on a "Bog Bounce" outing. The instructor led them all. They found the water was cool. While wading through, the plant life was initially a bit disconcerting, but all began to acclimatize. They could feel the spongy bottom of the bog and soon the bog bouncing started. Once all were acclimatized Geoff or Drew could point out the frogs, water spiders near the surface, and then the birds above. The pace was slow and the focus was on camper discovery with only a little commentary by the instructor. Their aim, like that for the blindfolded Pathfinder group was to encourage acclimatization of young campers to natural settings. Understanding basic concepts of climax forests and bogs was but a tool to reach a deeper sense of nature's ways and set the stage for how we can best support these habitats.

Acclimatization was the bedrock of the Nature Lore program that summer led by Drew Daniels, Geoff Vernon and myself. While the names and dates are correct, the examples are broadly based as I did not keep a detailed diary of our outings. Our program of Acclimatization was an adaptation of programs outlined by Steve Van Matre in his book of the same name published earlier that year by the American Camping Association . This book, based on Steve's own experiences with Nature Lore programs in the United States, outlined the need and the means to put campers into natural settings in unique ways. These novel experiences immersed campers in specific natural environments. They provided a deeper method of teaching where the didactic becomes but a small part in the education overtaken by immersion in, and comfort with, various natural habitats.

In the 70s we did not think about climate change but we did think about pollution. (Past Kilcoo staff members Peter Middleton and Michael Hatton were deeply involved in the early days of Pollution Probe). Our mission was similar to Van Matre's, namely to teach young boys and men to experience and understand the beauty and complexity of nature, with the hope that in future they would recognize the perils of the widespread pollution of these natural habitats.



The sole reason this program was put in place at Kilcooo in 1972 owes its origin to whom else: Chief. It was Chief who approached me and calmly handed me Van Matre's slim paper back during advance camp that summer wondering if I might find it of some use. I do not recall many further discussions with Chief on this, but knowing a little of Chief's philosophy on education, I can well believe that this "experiential' approach to learning was one he would have relished. As always Chief provided insight but left it to you to carry on from there. Certainly, for me the path became clear as to how Nature Lore should be taught that summer at Kilcoo. It is worthy to note that Steve Van Matre was subsequently invited to Kilcoo in the 1970's and 1990's.

BILL BOBIER
1960-1973

GO LEAFS GO!

For those of you who live in the Toronto area or who follow professional hockey we don't need to tell you about the new found enthusiasm about the Toronto hockey team, the Maple Leafs.

Accordingly, it is time to recognize our esteemed publisher of the Gazette: Mike "Huggy" Adamson for the staunch Leafs fan he is, and has been for some time. In fact, he and his wife Sara are both incredible fans, cheering on the blue and white all season long. They even have a tradition of decorating their home all things Leafs for the playoffs each year. Leaf fans salute you Huggy and thank you for your wonderful work on the Gazette through the years.

