THE GULL ROCK GAZETTE

Volume 30 Issue 1 - Published by Kilcoo Camp - Spring 2023
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CLASH OF THE KILCOO TITANS

"...the easy transition at camp from the loud and noisy Lodge to the peaceful Chapel Point is what makes camp perfect." - Lub

For each present and former Kilcoo camper and staff, there's a favourite spot, activity and cabin we cherish the most. Maybe the swim docks, baseball diamond or tuck shop, but none more than Chapel Point and the lodge.

To me, these two spots are the most memorable and important places at camp. Curiously, they're also polar opposites. They are the yin and yang of camp – opposite forces. Brothers from a different mother. The shoulder angel and devil that represent our conscience and temptation. We tend to act our best, most proper, most reflective at Chapel Point; loud, boisterous, rude, even crude in the Lodge.

If you had to choose one, and only one, which one would you choose? Which one can you live without? Next time you see me, let me know. I'll take an unofficial straw poll.

I'm a social addict with a great fear of missing out...first to arrive and last to leave a party. So my first instinct is to choose the Lodge. With all its history, always full of energy and dripping with camaraderie, simple and open yet so vibrant when full. It has seen thousands of different combinations over the years and likely the worst





table manners since the Vikings roamed the seas. Cabin signs of yesteryear and pictures of our fallen friends and mentors. I actually have scars from the place and some of my greatest stories.

As good as your stories are, someone has one better. The older we get, the better our ability to embellish becomes. Poor judgement has been a staple in the Lodge, especially after 11pm.

If the lodge is where we let our humanity fly, Chapel Point is where we transcend and strive to be more. We think, we listen, we





ponder. I remember listening to absorbing sermons from Michael "Mouse" Roland or Tim Wilson. More recently, Scott Russell getting misty as he gets introspective on the importance of camp life. It always gets a bit dusty when Tim Magwood sings a folksy tune as we stare at the glistening water through beautiful trees thinking about friends who've left us.

We leave inspired to be better, do more, and learn to appreciate life. This is where we go to wake our conscience up. I need this place to offset the efforts of the previous night or week or month. If only we could do chapel without the throbbing headache.

Like it or not, I love the lodge, but I need Chapel Point. Both are about the people. Kilcoo is full of beauties. Vikings at night and monks the next morning. It's been a pleasure sharing both with you all. I hope there will be many more years of R&R - Rowdy and Reflective!!

All for one…

KEVIN DEVINE
1981-1993

EDITOR'S MUSINGS



David Latimer often speaks of Kilcoo Magic and I think it is a term understood by so many alumni for whom their continuing connection with camp is important many years after their last summer on staff.

This bond that people feel for Kilcoo and the many friends developed during their youth comes out in many ways. It is certainly the central theme of Kyle Morris' (2011) article in this issue and was no doubt the motivation behind Scott Russell's (1983) desire to investigate the Irish birthplace of the Plewman family from which the Kilcoo name originated. It can also be observed in the articles by Brad Moyle, (2010) Kevin Devine, (2002) Jeff Lloyd, (1979) and Jeff Graham (1993) as their articles illustrate things about Kilcoo that remain important to them.

But there is more, and this might be more difficult. Many of us do not see many of our Kilcoo friends very often, but when Jeff Lloyd became sick and passed away very quickly earlier this year there was a flurry of e-mail activity from his many friends along with favourite pictures. This same outpouring of emotion was evident when it was learned of John Soule's (1970) passing in March and also when people heard about Derek Allen's recent accident which resulted in a brain injury which proved fatal and Gord Petch (1969) and his battle with cancer.

These are all indicators that Kilcoo Camp stands for something very significant in the lives of many of us, maybe as many as one thousand of us, even as we carry on with our own lives filled with satisfying achievements and stressful pressures. This may be why the alumni reunions every three years are so well attended. John Hammett (1982) recently told me that communication he receives primarily in the form of the Gazette continues to be his lifeline to Kilcoo.

I still receive e-mails from and talk to alumni who reminisce about the weekend reunion and how important it was that they could not only enjoy the weekend with alumni from their years at camp, but also mix with and talk to other alumni who may have been much younger or much older.



So, taking from Kevin's lead article in this issue, whether Chapel Point or the Lodge is your favourite place in camp, or there is another favourite spot, the fact remains, we keep in touch with the camp because it represents something very important to all of us.

PAUL CHAMBERLAIN (1967)

AMICI'S CANOE HEADS

Since 1964 many of us have considered Amici to be Kilcoo's signature charity and for the past 15 years its biggest fundraising event has seen up to 180 members of the camping community from several camps paddling and portaging across Toronto's waterfront with a goal that in the past few years has successfully reached over $250,000.

There are quite a few Kilcoo alumni participating including myself for the 13th year and hopefully many of our Gazette readers will offer their support for the event. To make a donation you can go to amicicharity.org and use the links to Canoe Heads and Donate now to support the event.

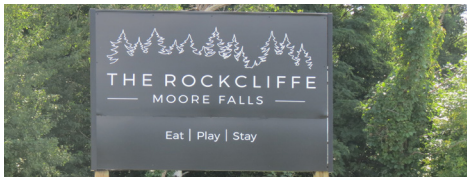


THE "NEW" ROCKCLIFFE

To at least two, maybe three generations of Kilcoo staff, the Rockcliffe in Minden provides the source of interesting stories. More recently, after being closed for some time and new owners trying unsuccessfully to get permits for renovations, a new "branch" of the Rockcliffe has been opened - at Moore Falls.

This Rockcliffe offers events from live music to trivia to sporting events. They offer very comfortable overnight accommodations and tasty meals. In fact, quite a few alumni sampled their dinner menu before arriving at the reunion last September.

They will be celebrating their one-year anniversary on July 1st this year and their website lists activities planned through the summer. If you do visit The Rockcliffe this summer don't forget to include a visit to camp. Lub and his staff will be happy to welcome you back.



FIRESIDE CHAT

From Lub and the entire Latimer Family

As always, I am very happy to be writing this fireside chat for the Gazette. As I write this, I am already at camp, and we are about to begin Advance Camp – the earliest ever. Stuart Armstrong, our off-season coordinator, with David Gillmeister, James Southey, and Thomas Bellamy are also up here with me. We have begun preparing for our first group: 250+ indigenous youth with an organization called Outside Looking In, who arrive on April 30th. We have 12 more staff arriving at the end of April, as well as my daughter Brooke and some of her friends from Camp Tanamakoon. Brooke will not be joining Kilcoo Camp as Assistant Director, as our April Fool's joke may have led you to believe. She will be returning to 'Tan' this summer, where she will be Head of Operations and Assistant Head of Waterfront, which we are all very excited about – but her most especially. The rest of our spring is full of groups of all ages, including a couple of grade 6 grad trips, a group of Dragon Boaters from the University of Toronto, the Shader Kids (Tim Ross) fundraising weekend, Hoang and Luke's Poker fundraising weekend, along with our regular school groups.

This upcoming summer will be Kilcoo's 92nd as well as my 39th as the Director, which is difficult at times for even me to try and comprehend. Our summer is full; in fact, one of our sessions was full within two hours back in September. We also have an amazing group of 90 staff, who, all but two are homegrown. We at Kilcoo are so grateful for the loyalty of our campers, LITs, and of course our staff. Our staff have all, for the most part, grown up here; even the instructors come from connections within, and I find that I always prefer our type of homegrown staff that have our ethos embedded into them because they have spent every summer at Kilcoo since a young age. This summer, we are also very lucky to have a group of 53 Leaders-in-Training, which is one of our largest groups of LITs ever, and this group makes me evermore hopeful about Kilcoo's future.

Something we are all excited for at Kilcoo is our new museum/office, which will begin construction in September. The original idea for this building was to be a Kilcoo museum, and because our camp is only used for a few months of the year, we are combining this space with our new office building. On the main floor, there will be working spaces for my team and I, surrounded by historical pictures and artifacts, and the second floor will be a beautiful Alumni Lounge Museum that reflects the history of Kilcoo. We are hoping that Alumni can get involved in this project, either





by donating money or artifacts. There is more on this later in this Gazette.

Over the past year, it has been a joy for Beth and I to watch as our sons TJ and Charlie become more involved in Kilcoo. They have a very keen interest in the camp, and I turn to them more and more for advice and guidance. We are also lucky to have them helping Kim and me in the office with administrative tasks. Kim, who has been with us for 34 years now, is also excited about this as she is now teaching my boys what my parents taught her – which means she is now working with her 3rd generation of Latimers. TJ and Charlie are now done university and therefore officially alumni of Western and look forward to their next chapter which we all hope, and I'm sure will, involve Kilcoo at some point. When Beth and I decide to finally buy a place in Florida near the Curries it might be time for them to take over, but I figure that this is at least 10 years away for sure and a chance for me to really get good at pickleball, of which we have a court at camp.

As always, there is an open invitation for alumus to visit Kilcoo. Whether you want to watch the Olympics in August, Bushpede in July, a Chapel service on Sunday, or just experience everyday camp life, we are open to you always. Just let me know in advance if you want a tour or stop in if you're driving past the gates. If you want to come back to camp for more than just a day visit, my parent's cabin (the Longhouse) will be unused a few weeks of the summer and we thought we would open this up for Alumni to rent. The Longhouse is secluded from camp, but you are still able to use the camp! There are 6 bedrooms, and it can sleep up to 15 people, which means you can bring up your family, a group of families, or a group of Alumni. We really want you to be able to come back to your Gull Lake and experience Kilcoo in a more luxurious way. Reach out to me if this is something you would like to do – it is a great opportunity. This includes the off seasons as well.

I hope you all enjoy this Gazette and as always, I would like to thank Paul and Mike Adamson for their efforts in making this happen. Mrs. Chief (who is doing pretty well in her 87th year and continues to show resilience and a strong love of camp and her family), Jeff, Mike, Beth, Charlie, TJ, and Kim, all join me in wishing you all well and thank you for being so involved in our amazing camp, which continues to be the 'Maker of Men.'

RIP RAM RAZZLE SCRAM
DAVID "LUB" LATIMER

WHAT DID BEING AN LIT AT KILCOO MEAN TO ME?

I remember wanting to be an LIT at Kilcoo almost as soon as I arrived at camp for my first summer as a camper in July 1995. I was in Cabin 3 and had two LITs that summer: John Crean and Tony Wilson, two very different leaders but both of whom embodied the cool nonchalance of what, at that age, I thought it meant to be an LIT. The perception that I had of LITs as a 10-year-old was only partially correct, but suffice it to say the impression they left on me was more than enough to make me want to follow in their footsteps.



CITs in 1958

Fast forward 6 years to the summer of 2000 and I was a Voyageur camper in Cabin 22. My LIT that year was Cam Johnston, who had to leave camp and recover at home partway through the July session due to illness. Somebody decided that we were old enough to get by without an LIT for the rest of the month. My counsellor, Cam Scace, decided to replace Cam with a flattish rock about the size of a cantaloupe. As a cabin group, we brought the rock with us to activities, meals, Kilabaloo, etc. Perhaps I should have taken this as a hint about where in the pecking order certain staff members saw LITs, but I suppose hindsight is 20/20. (Sorry Cam).

Later in the month, Lub and Dave Beeston, the Voyageur section director, invited 15-year-old campers who were interested in learning about the LIT application process to an evening meeting at the Voyageur campfire area. We were told that we would be asked to write a letter late in the fall of that year describing why we wanted to return to camp as an LIT. I wrote that letter with help from my Dad, Dave Moyle, who himself was an LIT (referred to back in his day as a CIT), staff member, and senior staff member for many years. My Dad had me identify the key phrases in a letter Lub had sent to all prospective first-year LITs for the next summer before I crafted my response. I honed in on the commitment and responsibility that Lub wrote about in his letter, and I emphasized those in my reply. I do not remember exactly what I wrote about but obviously I had said something right, because I was asked back as a first-year LIT for the summer of 2001.

My first introduction to the world of being an LIT came later that winter, well before my arrival at camp. The LIT directors and Lub invited all LITs to a meeting at Royal St. George's College in Toronto to talk about the summer and what our role would be. The LIT directors that year were Pat Tingley, Will Hamber, and the recently departed Shane McCarthy. Shane had a unique presence in that group, as anyone who knew him would attest. He had an incredible and quirky sense of humour, and knew how to capture a room with a perfectly-timed joke or bit of physical comedy - a truly larger than life figure. In my view, Shane was everything I was not as a young person, and I learned so much from him about how to lead. As I was a quiet and not especially confident 16-year-old, Shane challenged me to step outside my comfort zone and do the things that I did not find easy: Kilabaloo skits, speaking at the front of the lodge, or really anything else where I was the centre of attention. These skills still do not come naturally to me, but remembering the way Shane seemed to draw energy from the eyes that were upon him in those moments still allows me to feel the potential that Shane saw in me at a young age. I regret that I never had the chance to share that with him, but I will never forget the influence he had on me.

The experience of being an LIT was probably not as glamorous as my Trailblazer self had imagined, but I loved every minute of it. As an LIT, I felt like I was part of an exclusive club, which is strange given that LITs are more or less indentured servants. Some of the jobs that I (and probably many of you) did while at Redside/Redstone, the 2-week-long first-year LIT training program that has been situated variously on Little Redstone Lake, Braeside, and now Ruth's Island, were less than fun. However, going through a sometimes challenging experience with a group of peers is truly one of life's most powerful bonding experiences.

On one of the final mornings of my first-year LIT trip down the Petawawa River our trip leader Steve "Bear" Reble decided that

we were ready to fend for ourselves. Bear woke early and broke camp silently, without waking the rest of the group, and loaded his gear into a canoe. The rest of us awoke just in time to see Bear gliding away from the campsite, carried downriver by the current and his super-efficient paddle stroke that seemed to defy the laws of physics. We soon realized that this was a test and proceeded to pack up, load our canoes, and set off towards the next set of rapids that were a short distance downriver from our site (no doubt a deliberate choice by Bear, who was planning this several days in advance).
Upon reaching the top of the set we dutifully pulled over to shore and scouted the rapids, and saw Bear perched on a rock down-river eating breakfast and observing our progress! Fortunately, we got down the rapids without dumping and joined Bear for breakfast before enjoying the rest of our trip together.

My time as an LIT set the stage for the rest of my Kilcoo career: four summers as a Trailblazer counsellor in Cabins 1 and 2, two years as section director, three Advance Camps, two Post Camps, and finally a glorious final two years on staff supporting the LIT program by leading 2nd year LIT trips on the Missinaibi River in northern Ontario. Bill Cruess observed that I may be the only former Trailblazer counsellor to ask for a job that involved being out on trip for a month at a time, but obviously my many overnights at Trout Rock (and, of course, my own whitewater paddling experiences as an LIT at Kilcoo and elsewhere) left me with enough latent river paddling ability to co-lead a trip of that scale.

It's hard to describe the LIT experience to anyone who has not been through it themselves, either at Kilcoo or another camp. Why would anyone choose to work for no pay for two years (and actually pay for the privilege as a first-year LIT) digging mud pits on the soccer field, stewarding meals, and being at the bottom of the staff pecking order?

In hindsight, I do not have a good answer to this question, but I know that I enjoyed my time as an LIT immensely and had the opportunity to learn from some of the most naturally skilled leaders I will ever know: my LIT directors Tingles, Will, Shane, Kevin Love, and Scott Blue; trip leaders Steve Reble, Rob Burkett, and Gord Cruess; and others like Lub, K-Way, and of course Chief, who had a tradition of hosting each Redside group at the Long House for a celebratory dinner, in my case prepared from live ducks that we decapitated in his driveway with a cleaver borrowed from chef Jean-Marie.

Having gone on to a career in education, I can confidently say that this particular leadership development strategy might elicit more than a few phone calls and emails from concerned parents of my students. Whether in the classroom or on an outdoor education trip, I aim to give my students the same sense of esprit de corps that I had as an LIT at Kilcoo. A lofty goal, to be certain.

BRAD MOYLE
1995-2010



LITs in 2022

THE HISTORY OF KILCOO FRISBEE GOLF

In the late summer of 1992 during a "Bones" section directors' period the only thing I could find in the Rec Hut was a bunch of frisbees. So, I gave each camper a frisbee and we spent the period walking around Mohawk Park, Arts and Crafts, the baseball field, the museum, soccer field, basketball court, tuck shop, climbing tower and back to the Lodge, all the while throwing frisbees at different objects. Thus, the first 9 holes of a frisbee golf course were accidentally created. It was so much fun that for the next couple of days all of my Directors Periods were spent playing and refining those 9 holes.

One morning Mike (Mouse) Roland joined our playing group and insisted that we expand the course by 9 holes. We created another 9 holes that went from the Lodge, along the beach, by the sail cabin, Voyageur firepit , Indian Council, Nor westers stairs, The Hole, The Swamp and down into the Trailblazers section.
The course had 18 holes.

For that last week of camp, we introduced as many campers and staff to this new game. It became so popular that Lub saw it's potential and ordered the first Kilcoo Frisbees for the next summer.

Well, 1993 was my last summer and by the end of Advance Camp after many games played by the school groups and Advance camp staff, it was decided that the course flowed better with the original back nine going towards the swim tower becoming the new front nine, and the original front nine becoming the new back nine. The official course was now in place. It was a popular game all summer and tee times after dinner were tough to get.

I've been gone physically from Kilcoo for 30 years now and every time I've returned for visits, reunions, weddings, stags and such I've always been surprised that the game is still being played, and in the spirit of Kilcoo tradition it's still the original course being played. I have even learned that they gave it the name "Frolf" (Frisbee Golf) and that it was now a regular daily activity. There's even a group of Alumni that return every fall and have a tournament. (Yours truly never invited)

That makes a rough estimate of each Kilcoo season having 150 days with 5 rounds being played daily by 30 years is around 22,500 rounds. Well, that deserves a Kilcoo style celebration, so we've been at work making this 30th season something special.

New logo, new Frisbees, shirts, tee blocks, score cards and I hope to find a younger alumnus with a drone to do a fly over of every hole and upload it for all to see.

We're trying to minimally have an alumni Frolf day, most likely in the fall (buses from Armor Heights or Gabbys) Full day tournament, halfway house, Lub's golf cart selling adult drinks, closing ceremony and charter back to the city.

I saw a letter to Lub that read:
"Alumni" will want to return Lub!
The Kilcoo camper and staff has rolled by like an army of steamrollers.
Cabins, kybos have been torn down and rebuilt. Activities like riflery, water skiing have come and gone, but the one constant through all of Lub's years has been Frisbee Golf "Frolf."

This camp, this game "Frolf" is a part of our past. It reminds us of all that once was good, and it can be again. Ohhhhh , Alumni will come Lub , they will definitely want to come back and play.

Rip Ram

JEFF "BONES" GRAHAM
(1977-1993)



KILCOO MAGIC

Charles Dickens' 1851 essay "What Christmas Is, As We Grow Older" asked of that jolly holiday what I might try to do here with respect to a different institution—one which played, to my good fortune, a formative role in my life: Kilcoo Camp. My counselling career ended in 2011. I had achieved everything I set out to accomplish upon first arriving at Kilcoo in July, 2001 as a ten-year-old Trail Blazer in Ryan McLaughlin's cabin 5: I had become the counsellor of cabin 21, "Sweaty Hogs."

Kilcoo has doubtless changed in the intervening decade: the aerial course was open, the Piglet was still shipshape and watertight, and the Rockcliffe—then located in Minden—wasn't a gastronomical experience in the sense of aspirational cookery, but in the sense of 'will I or won't I regret this mixed basket tomorrow morning'. In any event, what hasn't changed, so far as I can tell from the excellent pieces that Paul is able to continually solicit for the Gazette, is the longstanding sense of belonging and camaraderie that persists well after we all must bow out. This spirit—this Kilcoo spirit—came calling to me more than ever owing to the many disruptions caused by the pandemic.

Specifically, the fact that it torpedoed the planned Reunion of 2020, an event which my closest friends and I were planning to attend. But instead of feeding the wrong wolf, we found an alternative. So it was that we—Dave MacDonald, Will Carruthers, and Ben Driver—conspiring in the basement of a Front Street establishment, laid out a plan for an expedition into Algonquin Park. We were all nearly a decade out of practice. In my own case (I'll pause here to explain that my counselling career was decidedly on the Kilabaloo side rather than the tripping side of things; see 'The Morbid Ballet' on YouTube), my tripping practice was rather limited to begin with. It was quickly decided a stove would be brought. But the rust accreted through our sedentary post-camp occupations was quickly overcome; I volunteered to collect

THE KILCOO MAGIC RESTORED

and carry all the lifejackets and paddles over portage after portage like I was back in peak ’09 condition.

It was incredible. Best of all, however, was how well we got on. I’m not sure any of us went into it with any expectations that it was anything more than a one-off stand-in for the reunion. A rainy-day activity, if you will. But we all pulled together and contributed to the success of the party. The inevitable frictions were defused into jokes rather than compounded into frustrations. It was something I wouldn’t dare try with friends from other walks of life, the reason being the relationships we formed at Kilcoo were so strong that they could enable and support something so potentially fraught to work. And work it did. In 2021, refinements were made, and a second trip launched. Yet so many pieces in these pages grasp at something more; something beyond the solidity of relationships that form at Kilcoo, beyond in-jokes and cheeky stories—they expose the Kilcoo magic. And from reading many of these such stories in the Gazette, I was hopeful the magic would reveal itself to us in some way. Indeed, it nearly did when, as we approached a small portage that circumvented a modest set of a rapids, we encountered a visibly inexperienced party—not a single life jacket had been wedged under their beached canoes—grousing about having to unload their equipment, their garbage bag packs now evidently unequal to the task. Until an unctuous kid among them piped up. “We could get over those rocks,” he chirped, “couldn’t hurt to try.” Our mouths hung open. The set up was perfect. All he needed was a two-word phrase to clinch it and send the lodge out of breakfast. “Shut up,” someone from their group snapped. Alas, here was a starfish that didn’t get tossed back into the sea.

But on the last morning of the second trip, August 2021, we still hadn’t found it. And as we reached the western edge of North Tea Lake and debarked the boats for the final portage that would take us out of the park proper for what was looking like it might be the last rodeo, the prospects of finding the magic became dim, until we descended the wooden steps at the other end of the portage. “Hey, that guy’s wearing a Kilcoo shirt,” said a voice I didn’t recognize. “Hey, Rob, check it out.” I looked up curiously to see a group of guys I didn’t recognize, probably ten



years older than us. They were talking to Dave, who was indeed wearing a Kilcoo t-shirt. Then Rob came up from the shore. It was Rob Millman, my Trapper section director from July 2003. I would have been twelve turning thirteen at the time. I went over and re-introduced myself. He remembered me as if it had been 19 months, not years, that had elapsed. I could distinctly remember a campfire song he would do, “Yea, Mama Dear.” We laughed, exchanged well-wishes, and parted.

We had found the magic. Here we were, two parties passing on a portage, apparent strangers. The fact that we were there to begin with owed to Kilcoo. And but for Rob having impressed upon his friends the importance of camp to him, and their chance spotting of Dave’s shirt, we would have likely nodded and passed as strangers. A third trip was completed last year and proved to be just as successful.

As Charles Dickens concluded in ‘What Christmas Is, As We Grow Older’, “Therefore, as we grow older, let us be more thankful that the circle of our Christmas associations and of the lessons that they bring, expands!” It couldn’t be truer. Only, if you’ll allow, permit me to replace “Christmas” with a four-letter C word, and I think that just about describes us! I am happy to report that all early indications are positive for a fourth trip in 2023.

KYLE MORRIS
2001-2005, 2008-2011



CURTAIN AND BEARS

The following story was submitted by Jeff Lloyd just two months before his untimely passing. In tributes to Jeff in this Gazette issue by Randy Kline and Rob McAdam, Jeff's sense of humour is mentioned and it is certainly in evidence in this article.

Some of my favourite staff years were in Nature Lore. Whether under the tutelage of Geoff Kelk or Bob McComb in his omnipresent Brick hockey sweater.

Dissection. Bob would borrow the camp station-wagon for us to ghoulishly roam Hwy 35 at night looking for road-kill. If intact, our finds would be used for dissection along with lessons on skinning, stretching, and preserving the hide. Thanks, Pete Dixon, for teaching me how after I killed a rabbit on a canoe trip. But that's another story. One night with the station-wagon unavailable, he borrowed Chief's brand new car. I think a Cutlas convertible with Canary yellow seats. As luck would have it that night, we found a particularly large beaver with almost no damage. Placed it in a green garbage bag and laid it on the back seat. How were we to know the bag was going to leak? Not surprisingly, Bob said Chief did not take the news well. However, we did do a pretty good job getting most of the blood out.

The following day just before lunch, on a picnic table by the flagpole, I had a one-sided conversation with Mrs. Chief while trying to de-flesh the beaver. She said, "I just had a conversation with the kitchen staff… you will not keep road-kill in the kitchen refrigerators. You will not boil bones in the kitchen." "Oh, and no more dissection in front of the lodge."

Bog bounces. Bogs are really wonderful places to teach bio-diversity and a favourite activity of many.

Once, while fruitlessly trying to cajole a camper into the water after seeing a leach, I could hear the rest of the group further into the bog squealing and laughing. Frustrated with my progress, I threw the camper in. Biblical - he never touched the water. Catching up to the others, and to my horror, they were grabbing Northern water snakes sunning on rocks by the tails, whipping them around and smacking them against rocks. OMG!!! Kind of defeats the whole point of the outing. We took any snakes still living back to Nature Lore. All died. Dissecting them, we found most to be pregnant. Perversely, the experience turned into a learning opportunity. The campers were really fascinated by the fully formed baby snakes in strings of sacks and the birth process.



Curtains and bears.

The dump. On occasion, I took cabin groups to the dump off Hwy. 35 to look for bears- mostly Norwester section campers.

A typical outing would include analyzing bear scat to see what it had eaten and how long ago. Explore a swamp meadow of tall grass examining trampled paths and various tracks. The dump too of course.

Stopping along the dump road, I review safety rules. "If I stop and raise my arm - immediately drop and don't make a sound or move until I say otherwise. If I motion retreat, quietly WALK, not run, single file back to the highway to regroup. What do you do if confronted by a bear?" The number one answer is always play dead. To show how hard that would be, I ask a to camper lay on the ground and play dead while I act like a bear pawing away at him. I ask if anyone knows which body part(s) a bear would eat first? Answering for them "The salty parts, and no, not your forehead." Followed by a chorus of "ew", or "gross" once they figure it out. Testing them as we walked, they fail miserably, resulting in a lecture on how serious this really is and that I am not prepared to die because they can't be quiet.

Further along, my arm shoots up and I freeze, straining to hear. I whisper I would check around the corner. "Stay down, don't move and be quiet." I disappear around the bend.

After thrashing around in the tall grass for a moment, then running back to the group I scream "BEAR!" What a sight! Friendships be damned. Pushing, pulling and running over each other to get away. So much for an orderly retreat to the highway. As they say… you only need to outrun the other guy. It's a wonder no one ever got hurt!

Staying behind, I rub and bang a long stick against a rock until it looks very beat up and head back to the group. As I get close, breaking into a run and flopping down amongst them, struggling to catch my breath, I assure them we are out of danger - for now. "How big was it, was it close, how did you get away?" they ask. "Don't know. Grabbed a stick, swinging it as I ran." Inevitably a camper would pick it up examining the damage with the others and ask, "Are these teeth marks?" I reply "Don't know, all a blur. We should go now in case it comes back." We head back to camp.



Don’t drawn the curtain back.

Parents’ day on more than one occasion, an angry mother approached me with her son demanding to know if his cabin group had been attacked and almost killed by a bear while at the dump – “Why on earth would you endanger my son that way?” “Well lady… because your son is a little xxxx, and nobody likes him!” Ah, fantasies unfulfilled. Still think that would have been funny.

I confirm everything her son said was true, then ask if I could provide more details privately. Relieved to know it was a prank, we agree to keep it between the two of us.

Bears. I have camping memories (I confess, it scared the living crap out me at the time) of a counsellor banging pots and yelling at a bear in the middle of the night – “Don’t come out! – he’s right next to the tent” a shadowy silhouette lumbers about outside the tent, growling, ploughing noisily through brush. (No doubt a tripper or CIT). And then all clear. Makes a great story back in the city. On the other hand, I’ve had bears in campsites. The fake ones are much better.

If I’ve pulled the curtain back for anyone who was on one of my dump outings and are feeling slightly disillusioned… it was all in good fun.

Jeff Lloyd
(1970-1979)

SADLY, A FAREWELL TO JEFF LLOYD

Everyone knew Jeff as a big gregarious guy with a keen wit and constant sense of humour, opinionated and never shy. When he walked into a room everyone’s attention seemed to gravitate towards him. But not eve-ryone may know just how creative Jeff was. He was, of course, the Woodworking instructor at Kilcoo where campers were naturally drawn to Jeff because of his genuine passion towards making things. In fact, his house has no garage, but rather a two-car man-cave, with a fully equipped wood shop and beer fridge. This is often where Jeff and friends could be found. Jeff was just as adept carving a log with a chainsaw, as he was sculpting with fine hand tools. He made numerous things over the years from furniture to artwork and even the Smoothy Memorial golf trophy. And speaking of golf, its entirely appropriate that we name the long-est drive award at that annual tournament after Jeff, because the long, straight drive was Jeff’s illusive holy grail. Sadly, like Charlie Brown’s foot-ball, it was snatched away (almost) every time. For many years, Kline, McAdam, McCulloch and Lloyd would hit the links for a two-day boy’s golf weekend in the spring and again in the fall, and many rounds in be-tween. The golf wasn’t always stellar, but the memories were priceless. Unfortunately, our golf trips, like many other aspects of our lives, will nev-er be quite the same without our dear friend.

ROB MCADAM 1966-1975 ***RANDY KLINE 1964-1977***



A NEW KILCOO REUNION REVISITED

When my wife Catherine first told me that we would be visiting her family in Northern Ireland just prior to the Kilcoo reunion this past fall, I knew I had to make a pilgrimage to a village where I believed our camp's name had originated.

Kilcoo is a tiny village of 900 people in County Down about an hour's drive from Belfast. In Irish, Kilcoo or "Cill Chua" means "church of mourning," and legend has it that Saint Patrick's body lay in state there on the way to be buried in Downpatrick.

I was under the impression that this place was the family homestead of Kilcoo Camp's founder Charles Plewman and that he initially chose the name as a placeholder until he could think of another which was more in keeping with our Indigenous ancestors. But camp brochures were already hot off the press and he went with Kilcoo. Ninety years later, our links to Ireland remain.

It turns out that there is more than one Kilcoo across the pond. In fact, Charles Plewman's father Richard was born in Kilcoo House in Athy County, Eire and immigrated to Canada in 1888. Charles was one of eleven children of Richard and his first wife Ellen.





Who knew that our Kilcoo has roots in both parts of the Emerald Isle?

Undaunted, I pushed on, determined to discover one of the "other" Kilcoos.

After doing a little research, I found out that the hamlet of Kilcoo boasts the reigning All-Irish champions of Gaelic football. Nicknamed the "Magpies," they dominate play in County Down and have won the regional title an astounding 19 times.

Catherine's Uncle Edward kindly called the club secretary, Seamus O'Hanlon, and we were invited out to the meet the team and tour the Kilcoo Gaelic Athletic Association, (GAA), clubhouse on a typically, rain swept, Irish evening.

Passing by majestic St. Malachy's Church and over the rolling hills we entered the football grounds which proudly displayed a massive sign on a grassy bank proclaiming the Kilcoo Magpies as "Kings of Ireland."
We were greeted by the gregarious Seamus who took us through the facility which has become the centre of community life.

In the gymnasium there were young women wearing traditional garb taking a Gaelic dance class. On one of the emerald-green playing fields, the junior girls were practicing Camogie, which is a stick and ball sport reminiscent of lacrosse.

Meantime, the Magpies were already hard at work on the big pitch getting ready for their next match against nearby Newry. Still, they were happy to take a breather and hear about Kilcoo Camp in Ontario's cottage country and the story of how we are all tenuously, but happily, related.

We were introduced to the champion goalkeeper, Niall Kane, who had a great sense of humour and reminded me of some of the pranksters I met at camp over the years. I presented him with our Kilcoo Camp colours and he promised to display them in a prominent place in the clubhouse.

As we made our way back to Uncle Edward's house, which overlooks the brooding mountain called Finn McCool, I thought about the connections we sometimes make.

There is Kilcoo in Northern Ireland, Kilcoo House in the Republic, and the Kilcoo back home in the Haliburton Highlands. I reckon that all three are sacred places, each with a rich history and myriad tall tales to tell.

By visiting this tiny place, almost by co-incidence, I immediately understood the importance of a closely knit community and the beauty of camaraderie. That's what makes the spirit of Kilcoo, wherever you experience it, such a treasured thing.

SCOTT RUSSELL
(1971-83)

MORE ALUMNII WHO HAVE LEFT US

Jack Rhind - Jack passed away at the age of 102 after a long and very successful life in the insurance business. Jack first attended Kilcoo in 1939 when he took over the horseback riding program from Jack Pemberton. Like many Kilcoo alumni his life was filled with many roles taken in charitable organizations and like many Kilcoo alumni he was considered by friends and family as the ultimate prankster. Jack was a person who got things done and this was seen by an article he wrote in the Gazette a few years ago where he described going to Fenelon Falls to pick up horses to bring back to camp in time for the July opening of camp.

Tom Eby - I was saddened to hear of Tom's passing after a long and debilitating ill-ness. Tom attended Kilcoo from 1949 to 1958 where he moved from being a camper to being a counsellor. In 1970 Amici was looking for a treasurer and Tom, being in the financial field professionally, served in that role for several years and used his expertise to give Amici legitimacy as it worked toward incorporation.

John Soule - A lot of Kilcoo friends were shocked and saddened to hear of John's passing in March of this year. John began as a camper in 1959 and worked on the staff into the early 70's. Following his camp days he followed a very successful career as a lawyer while being very active in a number of activities outside work. Through the years he remained an active supporter of Amici while enjoying summers in the Muskoka and Georgian Bay area. We offer our condolences to his brother Colin who is also a Kilcoo alumnus.

Fred Ross - Fred passed away in February at the age of 92. He began his years at Kilcoo in 1947 and continued on as a counsellor and tripping guide. His obituary states that Fred embodied Kilcoo's Maker of Men motto and through his life he was a very giving person who did not judge others. He leaves several family members including another Kilcoo alumnus, Bruce Ross.

Brian Knight - Brian passed away in December at the age of 88. He first attended Kilcoo as a 7-year-old in 1942 and his daughter Karen says even in his last few years he would sing camp songs and tell stories of his time at Kilcoo.

NO APRIL FOOL'S JOKE

It started over 30 years ago with the 'Fab four' of Craig Prentice, Ted Pease, the late Trevor Pedler and Lindsay Ko who have been sending out e-mails in mid-March inviting a significant number of alumni to join them for an April Fool's Day luncheon which is scheduled as close to April 1st as possible. Clearly, it has become another of the many Kilcoo alumni traditions.

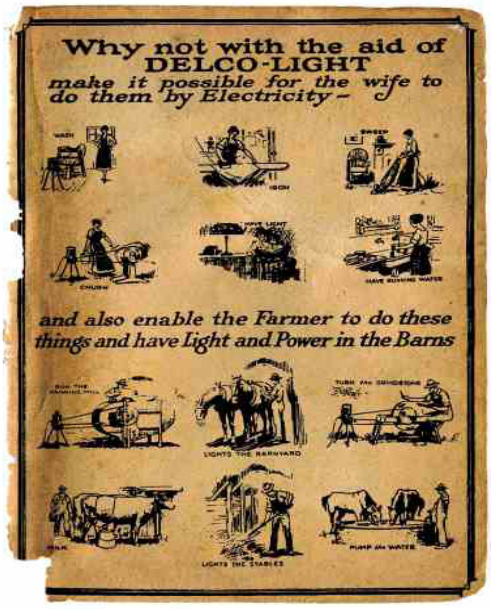
Lindsay relates that their thoughts were to 'catch up' with other Kilcoo buddies and so it has grown not only into something very special but also a quick snapshot as we journey through life. We started inviting more friends and buddies and occasionally had 'surprise' guests. Yes, we welcome all Kilcoo alumni.
The photo above was taken on April 5th of this year and if you think you recognize any of the participants, feel free to e-mail Lindsay to be put on the invite list for 2024. Not shown in this photo is the photographer, Chris Sainthill. Partially hidden are Dave Minnes, Kirk Lyon, Bill Kilner, Geoff Seaborn and Dave Hamer.



RECALLING KILCOO'S PAST

In looking back many years, to the 1930's which was even before you could use the 148 Ring 3 phone number, Kilcoo used battery powered generators to provide a semblance of proper lighting in the original lodge.

The source as some of our alumni from those days will remember were the Delco batteries, and until the arrival of hydro lines from the highway they were the only source of "electricity". The camper cabins of course went dark after sunset except for the emergence of battery powered flashlights.



The pictured Delco - Lite advertising poster is interesting in its own right as it depicts the accepted role of women in society at the time and certainly would not be considered politically correct in the 21st century.

REMEMBERING DEREK ALLAN

In this somber issue of the Gazette I received notice just today, April 27th, that my good friend Derek had passed away. Derek and I roomed together at camp in 1965 and traded barbs between my place on the canoe dock and his on the sail dock. More recently we collaborated in the creation of a most improved swimmer award in memory of Bob Slingerland. As a youth Derek enjoyed a good time with friends and it was no surprise that he fashioned a very successful career in academia at Trinity College at the University of Toronto. I will forever remember him as a kind, giving person who, while soft spoken, was a strong advocate of what was right and fair in life. He was a regular participant in our get togethers at the Duke of York Pub until Covid hit and will be missed but fondly remembered by many of us.

PAUL CHAMBERLAIN



DEREK ALLEN: SOME PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

Campers and staff members from the late 1960's will have indelible memories of Derek Allen as a sailing instructor and section director. To be frank, he wasn't your standard issue Kilcoo kind of guy (if there is such a thing) – a scholar of philosophy already, learned and smart as all get out, he had to work hard at being an extrovert. But anyone who knew him then will have a picture in their mind of him leading crazy section yells, standing tall and thin, long arms and hands spread out wide and waving at about hip level, urging the volume to rise. Or inventing the deity Phoebus the Sun God, famous for one golden summer, complete with that stone altar Derek got us to build at the top of Mohawk Park.

To show a side of Derek that's not so well known, the following is offered, with apologies for being so self-referential, as testimony to how indebted I have been to him for practically my whole life. A couple of years ago, while going through boxes of old family papers in our cottage attic, I came across a note from Derek. It reminded me that I owed him a grossly belated thanks for some things, so I wrote to him about them. They're paraphrased here:

When I was a senior camper at Kilcoo, I became an enthusiastic dinghy sailor under Derek's guidance. He had started something called the Kilcoo Camp Yacht Club, or KCYC, and picked a bunch of us for some serious sailing lessons. Once I was out racing at rest hour (I think), and a counsellor who really wasn't suited to Kilcoo made loud and relentless fun of my crummy skippering skills over a megaphone from a competing boat. By the time we came in to dock, I was on the verge of tears. Derek came up behind me on the sail dock and just rested a hand on my shoulder and told me to ignore the other guy. Knowing that Derek knew better than him, I felt immediately better.

Much later on, when I was 17 turning 18, I spent a year after high school hitchhiking around Europe. Derek was at Oxford University then, having won a Rhodes Scholarship. Somehow I had managed to be in touch with him, and he ended up kindly hosting me. He toured me around many of the University's colleges, and allowed me to sleep on his floor in Magdalen College for a night or two. I fell under the spell of that city of dreaming spires then and there, and got it into the back of my mind that I'd like to go there too someday.

A few years later still, I got the nerve to apply for the Rhodes myself. Derek kindly coached me in preparation for the interview. By then he was a junior faculty member at Trinity College in the University of Toronto, while I was in my final year at Victoria College. To be honest, although Derek was very conscientious and painstaking in all of his advice, I did get the feeling that he was inwardly thinking that I was out of my mind to even think of applying. (So did I, much of the time.)

One of the same pool of Rhodes applicants with me was John Allemang, a Trinity student at the time. As it turned out, he and I were both selected as Ontario's two Scholars that year and we've been pals ever since our selection. But only a few years ago John and I were on a walk together and discovered that Derek had actually coached both of us for our interviews and was supportive of both of us. The bottom line of this anecdote, it says here, is that Derek Allen didn't just win one Rhodes Scholarship, he won three.

My next contact with Derek came when he wrote to me as I was heading over to Oxford later the following year to take up the scholarship. His note was full of very earnest, very good advice about what he called 'the mother of movements and home of lost causes'. In addition, he reminded me that he had introduced me to his best Oxford (and later lifelong) friend, George Lawrence, who was then a junior lawyer practicing in London. I understand that at Derek's recent funeral (which, to my eternal regret, I was unable to attend) held in Trinity College Chapel, George came all the way from England to speak in his memory.

When I wrote to Derek to thank him for all of the foregoing, I closed the note with this:

"Hope to see you at a Chamberlain pub night before too long. Meanwhile, be well." Derek wrote back to me immediately to thank me. I don't think he ever made it to another pub night.

This June, I'll be back in Oxford for a reunion of Rhodes Scholars on the occasion of the 120th anniversary of the Trust's founding. I'll be taking a walk through Magdalen College, and thinking of Derek, a lot.

May he rest in peace, and his memory be a blessing.

DAVID HAMER
1960-1974

A MESSAGE FROM AMICI

As all of you are aware it was the 1964 camp staff that founded Amici and two years later started it on its way with the first campership. Thanks to the generous support and passion of the Kilcoo community, donors and partner camps, Amici has turned this vision into a reality for thousands of children from low-income families.

With the same incredible mission that was developed by founding group, Amici Camping Charity is now proudly Amici Children's Camp Charity with a new visual identity! With this change, we are providing our community with a clear and concise understanding of who we support and what we provide. This change enables our community to better recognize our focus on enriching the lives of children through camp experiences.

Our new visual identity tells the story of summer camp and showcases the activities, environment and unique community associated with camp life. These icons highlight what the camp experience is all about! The Amici name remains central to our new logo, continuing to grow the name recognition that has been built by the Kilcoo community.

Amici Children's Camp Charity

With a commitment to our vision of supporting more campers each summer, we sought input from our passionate community including many of you. The resulting valuable insights and feedback helped inform the process and identify areas for growth. With the support of a creative design agency Amici's new name and visual identity were developed.

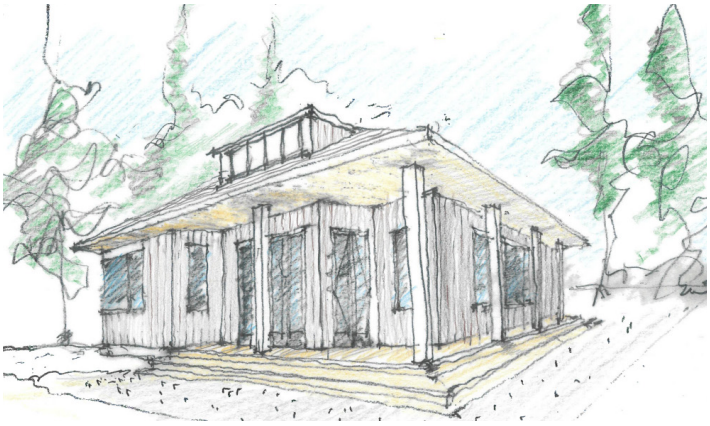
While our name and visual identity have undergone a transformation, our mission and vision remain unchanged and we are confident that our new name and visual identity will generate increased awareness for Amici, attracting new partnerships within the camping community. This will amplify the impact of our donors, ensuring that we support more children across Ontario.

We are thrilled to embark on this exciting new chapter for Amici Children's Camp Charity and express our deepest gratitude to the incredible Kilcoo community for your support of Amici campers. You are the backbone of Amici, and we can't thank you enough. Together, let's con-tinue to change lives and make a lasting impact on the children who need it most.

JUDY MACGOWAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

UPDATE ON KILCOO MUSEUM

As many of you know, Kilcoo has plans to build a museum to showcase the rich history of Kilcoo. It will be a gathering place for past, present, and future; and for campers, LITs, staff, parents, alumni, and friends to discover and explore our history's unique offerings. It is also a way for you—the Alumni—to reminisce about your special times at the camp and recall all those beautiful memories you hold dear. This museum will share a building with our office and tuck shop used in July and August. The museum will be on the second floor of a new building in the location of the current office.



I have heard many of you ask me—**How can I help?** To make this museum the best for generations, we would love the support of our alumni and Kilcoo families and friends. We don't usually ask for your help with our projects at the Camp, but we want to engage our past campers and staff because this will be as much a project for you as it is for us—if not more.

The first way that you can help is by physically donating your archives. Any photographs, artifacts, special awards, or things you are willing to part ways with so that they can be displayed in our museum for all to see and admire. The second way to support is a financial gift. After several discussions with alumni, we have decided the most inclusive way to do it is by estab-lishing what we will call the **"Peace Tree Circle"** for this unique project. It will be a group of 250 individuals, families, companies, or even friend groups that give a gift of $1,000. We want to recognize the people who believe in the values and traditions of Kilcoo and preserve those for generations to come. Your generous giving would be acknowledged with a beautiful donor recognition display in the museum's central area. If interested in either way for supporting the project, please email kim@kilcoo.com.

DAVID LATIMER