THE GULL ROCK GAZETTE

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COVID-19 HITS THE WORLD - AND KILCOO

2020 and 2021 will always be remembered as the era of the pandemic. There are surely not any of Kilcoo's alumni who have not been affected by it in some way. For some of you it has been more costly - emotionally, physically or financially - but hopefully everyone will emerge from it and move forward. In 1947 a world wide outbreak of the polio virus disrupted the summer at Kilcoo but not in the way the Covid virus did this past year. Several alumni have shared their experiences of the past year in this issue.

Kim Graybiel (1958-64)
from Regina, Saskatchewan

We first heard about the coronavirus in late January, 2020 while visiting my wife, Luisa's family in the Philippines. Shortly after news broke of a deadly new virus in Wuhan, China, we learned that a Chinese tourist had died from this disease while vacationing in Cebu, in the southern Philippines. Within a week, the Philippine government had banned all travel by Filipino and Chinese citizens to and from China, as more deaths were reported in Wuhan and neighbouring provinces. Fortunately, Luisa and I were able to leave the Philippines in early February, as we'd planned, shortly before the travel ban was extended to other foreign visitors.

Our trip home to Regina went smoothly, although we learned on the way how unprepared Canada was for the pandemic. It was mandatory to wear a mask and have a temperature check when we passed through the Hong Kong airport and boarded our flight to Vancouver. However, air travellers arriving in Vancouver from China were only asked to report a cough or fever to an immigration officer, on a voluntary basis.

Luisa and I travelled to Ontario in March, 2020 to celebrate our granddaughter, Ella's first birthday, a week before COVID-19 was officially declared a pandemic. We ended up staying for almost 5 months during the first wave of the pandemic due to government travel advisories, which enabled us to keep a close eye on our three sons and their families living in Toronto and Hamilton. We enjoyed socially-distanced dinners on their decks, family walks in nearby parks, and basketball and soccer games in the backyard with our four-year-old grandson, Diego.

We ventured out to the Metro Toronto Zoo one weekend after it reopened in July, where I told our three young sons, who are now in their late 30s, about the time we met Chief by chance during a visit to the zoo in the late 1980s. When the boys started fooling around in front of the orangutan cage, Chief, who was standing nearby, overheard me telling them not to disturb other people by acting like orangutans. Chief and I recognized each other at that moment, and shared a good laugh. We were delighted that Diego and Ella were just as excited to see the orangutans and other animals there as our sons had been more than 30 years earlier.

When we stayed at our son's place in Hamilton, I took long walks every day with his Chocolate Lab, Webb, on the nearby Bruce Trail. Unfortunately, Webb didn't understand the concept of physical distancing until a close, and painful, encounter he had one day with a skunk.

When travel advisories were eased last summer, Luisa and I began planning our trip home to Saskatchewan. Since we were wary about flying, we decided to buy a used car from a neighbour in Hamilton. We soon set off on a 4-day road trip through northern Ontario and Manitoba, with little traffic on the TransCanada Highway around Lake Superior due to the pandemic, and arrived safely in Regina in late August.

We've stayed close to home since then, as the second wave of the pandemic spread throughout Saskatchewan. The high incidence and rapid spread of variant cases here has resulted in the lockdown of many businesses and school closures, and restrictions on social gatherings and family visits, as in Ontario.

Several of Luisa's relatives working as nurses and caregivers in long-term care homes and hospitals have tested positive, and infected other family members who had to be hospitalized. This has brought home the risks that our front-line health care workers face as COVID-19 variants spread in the community.

Spending more time at home during the pandemic hasn't prevented Luisa and I from connecting with family and friends, and staying involved in community activities, through social media, Zoom calls, and small gatherings. One of the other benefits of staying home in Regina has been the chance to listen to a wide range of music performances and concerts being streamed on the internet. We've particularly enjoyed listening to Yo-Yo Ma's recording of a favourite song from camp singalongs, Oscar Hammerstein's "You'll Never Walk Alone", from a recent benefit concert to support fellow musicians during the pandemic. Listening to this inspiring music has brought back many fond memories from my Kilcoo days. I think it can also provide hope and strength now, to help guide us safely through the perfect storm the pandemic has caused.

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Kim with grandson Diego

EDITOR'S MUSINGS

I guess this issue of the Gazette could be aptly named "The Covid 19 Issue". For all of us the past 14 months have been unique and in some cases rather devastating. Our front page will lead off our attempt to share the experiences of a variety of Kilcoo's alumni of different ages and from different places and we can only hope as the number of those vaccinated continues to increase world wide we will emerge from whatever protective pattern we have been following into a lifestyle somewhat closer to normal.

In this issue of the Gazette David Latimer will comment on how he and the operation of Kilcoo have been affected over the past year and I am delighted that Jay Haddad (Camp Nokomis), Geoff Park (Camp Summit) and Grayson Burke (Cedarridge Camp) will share the difficulties they have experienced with their own camps.

Within the provincial camping associations, committees have been struck to work with provincial and local governments and health teams to plan for a hoped for healthy return to camp in 2021. Certainly, children need the contact with friends and the fun that camp offers more than ever. I have committed to participating in Amici's Canoe Heads fund raising event once again, I think for the 9th time, and it is my hope that Amici will be able to offer the camp experience to more children than ever and to many from communities where the need might be greatest.

With this issue of the Gazette we are beginning the practice of sending issues electronically and I hope it will allow alumni to maintain their contact with Kilcoo in an effective but much less costly manner. As with all issues I am so appreciative that we can benefit from the expertise of alumnus Michael Adamson who has been taking the raw material I send him for each issue and weaving it into what I think has been a "good read" for so many of us.

Preparing for this issue meant finding ways to reach out to 400 alumni whose e-mail addresses were not current. I found this out when I sent the spring, 2020 issue by e-mail because the camp office was closed. Fortunately we discovered quite a few so that this issue is being sent to about 920 of the 1062 alumni on our data bases. If any of you have contact with other alumni who are not receiving the Gazette please tell them to send me an e-mail (pchamp@sympatico.ca) and they will join the rest of us in maintaining the Kilcoo connection.

So, we hope the campers will return to camp this summer albeit with some adjustments in routine to be made. Then, in the same way, I hope the 2020 alumni reunion will become a reality despite being a year late. Already we have over 140 alumni who have paid the fee or expressed an interest in attending, so despite there being a limit on the number of spaces still available I ask you to send me an e-mail if you want to participate so I can keep you updated. After dealing with the pandemic for over a year I expect it to be quite the event.

I know some of you have received your vaccine by now and I hope most of the rest of you will be vaccinated by some time in the summer at the latest and I wish all of you good health. For now, enjoy the articles in this issue of the Gazette.

PAUL CHAMBERLAIN
1956-67

HONOURING WWII VETERANS

Greetings from Chicago and a big how how how to my Kilcoo brothers.

It was March 4, 2008 and about a dozen area men and women met to discuss starting up Honour Flight Chicago with a goal of taking World War II Veterans for free to see their Memorial in Washington D.C. We had no money, no flight dates, no volunteers, but we knew we had a great idea. Initially we thought if we could at least fly our World War II Veteran fathers to their Memorial, we would have accomplished something. As of today Honour Flight Chicago has taken ninety five flights. We have flown 8,728 senior war veterans of which 6,318 were World War II Veterans.

My first flight was in June 2008 with my dad. While at his Memorial he pointed out different names in the Pacific where he served. When we stopped at the Guadalcanal inscription, my dad paused and it was the first time I found out he was there. I knew little about my dad's service until our trip.We had a great day.

I ended my flight days and left the Board after my fifty seventh flight. Soon after, Honour Flight Chicago started taking Korean and Vietnam Veterans to see their Memorials. Sadly we have lost almost all of our Veterans from the "Greatest Generation."

Fellow campers, I enjoyed every trip. I met some of the greatest people I have ever known. It was pure pleasure every time. My life has been better lived thanks in part to my days at Kilcoo Camp. Kilcoo made me a better person, husband, dad, grandfather, and friend. I learned more about survival at Kilcoo than I did in the Marine Corps. The food was better too! Some of the things I ate as a Marine were definitely not served in the lodge. At least I think not. Wait, we drank "bug juice!'

I'd like to close by telling you Leaf fans that I play hockey three nights a week with John Anderson. He rarely shoots on goal but he does give you the most beautiful NHL passes right on your stick. He tells great stories too. God Bless Canada, God Bless America, and God Bless our World War II Veterans for all they have given us. Freedom isn't free.

READ BOECKEL
1959-1966



FIRESIDE CHAT

From Lub and the entire Latimer Family

Hello from Gull Lake.

I have never been prouder and more encouraged by the Kilcoo community: the present day campers, LITs & Staff, and all their families; and all the alumni and their families. The support for camp has been remarkable and my family and I appreciate it so much. As I write this article, we are very optimistic about camp, but there has still been no official Green Light given to open summer camps this year. It is a very strange place to be, as we look towards our 90th summer and my 37th as Director.

Now, having said that, the Kilcoo Camp that you all remember in each of your own special ways, will always be there and this pandemic and how we dealt with it at camp will be another part of the big picture of Kilcoo's rich history. We talk about the Polio outbreak of 1947, of the impact of World War II, the "Ed Devitt & Staff exodus" and for each of us, our own personal hardships we may have overcome. It could be home sickness or an injury, a tough canoe trip, the struggle of getting up on water skis or the trapeze in Chissy's old aerial course. The beauty of camp is that awesome feeling of overcoming hardships as a young person and turning that into resilience and confidence that you take with you forever.

Now, our great collective challenge is this pandemic. Yes, it has been very challenging in many ways, for all of us; but never once have I ever felt that this could be the end of Kilcoo as we know it. In fact, we will better, stronger and Kilcoo will always be a place that you can call your second home.

So, as we look forward to the summer of 2021, we continue to build a safety plan and have assembled another great Health Centre team, who all believe in summer camp and in our ability to keep everyone safe. There will be rapid testing, cohorting, no visitors' days (I hear some of you saying, FINALLY!), amended canoe trip schedules, and other measures to ensure a safe bubble at camp.

Camp, I am sure, will look a little different this summer, but despite any modifications to routines and traditions, I truly believe that it will be an amazing experience for all the campers, LITS & Staff. Maker of Men is a well deserved motto for our camp, and this chapter will continue to teach those lessons.

I thank you all, once again, for your love and support. I look forward to welcoming you all back to camp someday, won't it be glorious! Please enjoy this first issue of the paperless Gull Rock Gazette, and let's all give another huge thanks to Paul Chamberlain for all his efforts with the alumni.

Please get in touch with me anytime, and please stay safe out there.

RIP RAM RAZZLE SCRAM
DAVID "LUB" LATIMER







2020 - A DIFFERENT KIND OF SUMMER

As a staff member at Kilcoo, we often looked forward to those rare days when we had camp all to ourselves. Of course, we had to earn them. I fondly remember reaching the end of August, the goodbyes, the final bus leaving, and the sense of accomplishment – it came with a mix of exhaustion and excitement for the night that would follow. After an incredible summer, we had a brief chance to feel like campers ourselves again, even just for a day – camp was ours entirely. And that first beer cracked on the dock always tasted better.
Back in early May 2020 at Cedar Ridge Camp, the prospect of camp without kids brought with it entirely different emotions. At the time, we didn't know what summer would hold; I was concerned yet still optimistic.

On May 16, Lub, Jocelyn Palm from Glen Bernard Camp, and I appeared on The Agenda with Steve Paikin. During the show we discussed the importance of summer camp and the precautions that camps were already taking to help keep campers safe and minimize the risk of COVID-19.

Back then, we understood the danger of COVID-19, but knew little about its impact on children. What we did know was the valuable role that summer camp plays for campers and staff; we were willing to explore every avenue to make it happen safely. Certainly, the idea of operating a summer camp during a pandemic was scary, yet we felt the experience was too important to give up on.

The show aired on a Friday; by 1:00pm on Monday, all that hope ended as Ontario Premier, Doug Ford announced the closure of all residential summer camps in Ontario for 2020. I didn't know how hard the news would hit me. I thought of the lost experiences and heartbreak for campers and staff, as well as the fear and financial uncertainty for camping professionals. The prospect of kids isolated, indoors, missing out on meeting new friends, developing independence, and building confidence was heartbreaking.

After the announcement, I had to get outside. I took my three-year-old son, Griffin, for a paddle. Understandably, he was more interested in putting his whole arm in the water and slowing the canoe than listening to me vent. Later that afternoon, I had an emotional video meeting with our staff, telling them about the cancellation. And I finished the day with a glass of wine as I wrote an update to our parents. The wine made the update more dramatic than it needed to be.
Camp was closed; there was nothing I could do about it. And without kids, was it still really camp?

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Cedar Ridge executive director, Peter Ruys de Perez, and I have had many conversations about how we would navigate all this. Immediately, Peter assured me that we didn't spend the last 15 years building a camp just to get derailed by this virus – we would get through it. But what would that mean, as canoes went unpaddled, cabins sat empty, and campers stayed home?

While many camps came up with great online programs, we instead decided to encourage our campers to stay away from screens as best they could and to make the most of the summer. In the meantime, we pledged to work on the property – to give our campers an even better camp to eventually return to.





To do that, we kept a small bubble of onsite staff – all of whom isolated together, worked hard from 9:00am-to-5:00pm each day painting, building trails, cleaning, cutting grass, and talking about programming for 2021. And the spirit of camp, though altered, remained. At 8:00am every morning, we met for Polar Bears. We often closed the day with a campfire – telling stories and singing songs. This routine gave the summer a bit of normalcy.

Personally, I will forever value the summer of 2020. It was like camp in miniature. I got to watch my three-year-old son and my eight-month-old daughter explore camp; in fact, I got to spend every day seeing it through their eyes as we swam, built sandcastles, and hiked. I watched Griffin face the high ropes with bravery and hit the trails with abandon – he embodied the spirit of camp. And I snuck in the odd afternoon dock beer, largely as an ode to when camp without kids felt like a treat.

Between Kilcoo and Cedar Ridge, I have spent the last 23 summers working at camp. I really did welcome the change of pace. However, the emptiness weighed on me. As campers and staff learn, laugh, bond, and adventure together, they make camp what it is – giving it life. I missed that. I am hopeful that camp will return this summer. If it does, I'll miss the occasional afternoon beer on the dock – but it will taste all that much better when the buses pull out at the end of August.

GRAYSON BURKE
1998-2005

2020: ANNUS HORRIBILIS

I remember well in 1992 when Her Majesty the Queen uttered that phrase; it was Vicki's and my first year at Camp Nokomis (then Bellaleo) but for the royal family in 1992: Fergie left Prince Andrew, Princess Ann divorced, Diana announced that Prince Charles was involved with Camilla Parker-Bowles, and Windsor Castle burned down!

For us, in Ontario, 2020 was our annus horribilis as the Premier closed all overnight summer camps: in March all income ceased, two weddings were cancelled as were school groups, and no campers. The bills continued with lease, taxes, insurance, plumbing, water, hydro etc. Fortunately, we received a generous donation from the Harold E. Ballard Foundation which allowed us to rebuild our Dining Hall roof. The Dining Hall had been built in 1952 as a Lutheran Church! Zak (our son and Camp Director) invited Staff and L.I.T.s to help with the rebuild and paint all of the camper cabins with a Benjamin Moore donation. My own project was to sand all of the tables and benches in our Dining Hall and put on three coats of Kilcoo Urethane! We opened up Nokomis to daily camper visits from Monday through Friday 10:00 am – sunset with 10 campers allowed per day (as per Covid-19 regulations); the camp put on a daily barbecue thanking all campers for their loyalty – this was all done at NO CHARGE. The most amazing side affect of last summer was the number of parents who dropped off campers, or spent the day reading by the lake, who asked if or when they could come to camp! This year, 2021, we have started our first Family Camp bookings on weekends in May/June and September/October where we don't' have groups booked or weddings – and this might continue all summer if overnight camps are again closed.



The other thing we are doing is taking in a double-cohort of L.I.T.s this summer; we had over 50 boys (July) and girls (August) who were 13, 14, and 15 in 2019 – they all missed 2020 – and now they are 15, 16 and 17!

We also have two weddings booked and three for 2022 – so we are hopeful. The key situation this summer is our prayerful hope that overnight camps are allowed to open. It's one thing to lose boys and girls for one summer as you can bridge that "pause"; this is something we once had to do in 2002 and we sent Zak to Kilcoo (Chief's last summer). I don't think we could survive two summers closed as that would mean campers who were 13 or 14 in 2019 would then be 16 and 17 in 2022 – those young people would have jobs, boyfriends/girlfriends, or perhaps might lose interest in summer camp!

We will see – but we remain hopeful! The one constant from the last calendar year is the same echo from parents as to how much our kids NEED summer camp after a year of masks, social distancing, no friends, no hugs, no play etc. As vaccinations are rolling out across Ontario, we are seeing a light at the end of this dark tunnel….."accept our pledge of earnest, deep devotion, as sinks the sun beneath the western sky". Camps have to be open for the devotion to continue!

JAY HADDAD
1959-73, 80-82



ANOTHER CAMP WITHOUT CAMPERS

When the decision came down from Public Health that we were not able to operate in 2020, writing to my camp community relaying this information was the hardest letter I have ever written....Some excerpts from that letter and thoughts on where we are now…

When COVID-19 first became a reality we immediately began work on investigating and advocating how summer camps might be able to operate within the parameters of the Public Health protocols. As a director of the BC Camps Association Board, I was directly involved with many colleagues from camps across BC and Canada and together we put forth a proposal for Dr. Bonnie Henry, BC's Provincial Health Officer, to review. We continued to work and plan (and hope) as we awaited a response...

Our BC Camps Association did receive a final decision from Dr. Bonnie Henry's team which read "...Dr. Henry replied that the risk to public health this summer of overnight camps is too great to endorse...."

We had done everything we could to keep camp open, exhausted every option, but summer 2020 was not going to happen. We had worked tirelessly to maintain hope and plan for camp over the late winter 2020 and into spring.

I want to recognize our summer staff team who had been patiently waiting for the word, continuing to develop programs and ramp up for the season. I also want to acknowledge our site staff and opening team led by 10 year staff Gary Stamper who began working on opening the property in early March. Further appreciation goes out to our full time staff of Emily and Rianne who found themselves chasing a moving target, planning for 100 different scenarios and they did so with grace, commitment and creativity.

From that point we continued to keep camp in a 'ready state' and tried to make the best of the situation by completing projects and improvements to our home away from home.





The fact that we were unable to open last summer was heartbreaking for me, my family, our staff, alumni and most importantly the campers. Everything we do here is for them and to have an empty camp last summer was unimaginable.

I have spent a minimum of 1 month at camp each year ever since my first summer at Kilcoo in 1988 and the entirety of every July and August at camp since 1993.

The silver lining of the summer of 2020 was the opportunity to have a 'summer' and it turned out to be an incredible time with my family and friends with a highlight of having Lub, Beth, Charlie, TJ and Brooke spend 2 weeks in BC with us. Just a couple of camp directors and their families making the most of a bizarro summer!

The past 14 months have been challenging times for all of us. The fact we are right back in the same position we were last year is unfathomable. We will and are continuing to approach the situation as we did last year, and we hope we have shown our camp community the values we pursue to impart to our campers by approaching this situation with optimism, positivity, the ability to find opportunity when there is loss, and to show resiliency.

We will get through this together with support and continued connectivity, and will hold onto the memories, anticipation and hopes for the coming summer at camp…we all need it now more than ever.

Rip Ram
Parky

GEOFF PARK
1988-2002

SUMMER 2020 SPARKS MEMORIES

It's spring again, but how can you tell in this timeless pandemic of restrictions and disappointment. As winter gave way to spring and we were thrust into another round of restrictions, I found myself thinking of better times; of travel and of friends and of hot sunny days. Inevitably I thought of camp.

August is Kilcoo in my mind. The month and the camp and the muggy overbearing heat are all rolled into one. I can still picture the chaos as the buses loaded up. The long drive out the 401 and up 35. The first sign of lunatics waving from rocky outcroppings along the highway and at last pulling under the arch and into camp.

Even all these years and miles later, there's a smell or a sound or a feel that transports me immediately back there. The feel of a dry wood dock under foot. The smell of an outboard engine on a still, quiet morning. The gulp of water passing between paddle and canoe. I thought so much about those kids who didn't get those memories last year: this ridiculous year in which kids needed camp more than ever. A break from the madness and a respite from the stress and the screens and the city. But I've thought a lot about the LITs and staff. Being a camper is such a weird and wonderful privilege, it's like you're transported to some tailor made fantasy land that exists outside the constraints of life outside. Camp is the original bubble, isn't it?

But then as you graduate from camper to LIT to staff, the experience deepens and builds and adds strength at the joints. That's when the lessons that were shaped and molded as a kid are quickly cured in the waters of Gull Lake. And damn, you can't replace last summer for them. Days off and early mornings and pre-camp and mid camp and the bonds of friendship that are so unique to a summer at Kilcoo. I've had a bunch of "summer jobs" since I left camp. I worked on the docks in Hamilton for a stretch. I planted trees out west. I interned in a soulless office tower. Not a single one of them held a candle to the experience I drew working at camp.



You want leadership - help a kid overcome homesickness. You want independence - lead a bunch of 9 year olds on their first overnight canoe trip. Working at a summer camp is better preparation to work in corporate Canada than a hundred internships.

I also know - the lessons of camp will endure. All those kids and all those staff members are at home now thinking about camp, thinking about the Kilcoo Olympics or about a Sunday morning at Chapel Point or nights with the best friends they'll ever know. If you were lucky enough to spend a summer at camp, well, as they say, you were lucky enough.

Anyhow, this is a very long way of saying I'm sad we didn't get to reunite the alumni in 2020. But I also know it was the right thing to do. And I guess my point amid all this, is that those kids will be ok. Yes, they never needed camp more. But more importantly, they never needed to lean on the lessons they learned at camp quite so much. And they will. Maybe 2021 will be different and better.

PETER ARMSTRONG
1986-91



Lodge in 2016



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Lodge in 2020

FINDING THE LIGHT PART 2

In the fall issue of the Gazette I included an article from Bill Meeker about his involvement with the Calgary based organization, Light Up the World(LUTW) which works to supply over 50 countries world wide with battery powered LED lighting systems to eliminate energy poverty. Inexplicably I omitted much of the detail Bill offered about his contribution. Hence, Finding the Light Part 2.

In my post Kilcoo life John Latimer gave me another opportunity. I attended an AMICI Annual Meeting and he was looking for volunteers for the Heineken Yard. Gord Wooley took on the Race Director role and I volunteered to be his right-hand man. The following year I took over from Gord and continued for another four years, along with my wife Jenn. I also joined the AMICI Executive (Tim Stanley, Bob Dameron, Wally Oakes, Mike Sherwood, Joan Smart, Shirley Davey, Tim Wilson, and Tom Yarmon were all part of the Board while I was there). During this time AMIC became an incorporated charity and I became the first Secretary to the Board. Being part of AMICI gave me direct insight into the privilege of serving people who were less fortunate. Being Race Director for the Heineken Yard showed me how much fun fundraising can be. Through the Yard I also got to work with many more AMICI/Kilcoo alumni – two of whom I think of often – Scott Merrick and Dave Graham – both fine individuals who were taken way too early from this Earth. I was very fortunate to work and know both of them. In fact, I handed off the Race Director role to Dave Graham.

Back to Ontario Hydro - I thought it would be a short gig – maybe five years (that was short then). I went on to stay for 33 years and in the process enjoyed a diverse range of jobs and experiences. Early on, I joined what became Ontario Hydro International. As part of OHI, I had the privilege of working in international markets across many different products and services that Ontario Hydro had developed.

Working for OHI, I traveled extensively in Europe and Latin America. It also gave me first-hand knowledge and experience working in Peru, Chile, and Argentina. These travels, combined with personal trips to Jamaica, Dominican Republic and Honduras exposed me to the huge gap in wealth and lack of a social safety net particularly in Latin America. My career showed me the critical role that electricity plays in all our lives in North America and it gave me a good understanding of renewable energy.

Added onto my experience with AMICI and OHI was another journey that I wrote about in the Gazette back in 2015. "Summer Camp in Spanish" talked about my family's adventures with El Hogar in Honduras – working to break the cycle of poverty for hopelessly poor children in Honduras by providing a safe and loving home and education. My wife and I have been fortunate to be able to travel to El Hogar every year since 2007 to work and play (except for 2020 due to COVID) and all our kids have taken multiple trips – for all of us it has created a desire to make a difference.

All these journeys and experiences went into my decision to join the Board of Light Up The World (LUTW). In January I accepted the role of Board Co-Chair. This has been an amazing journey for me and given me another chance to engage in what I believe is a very worthy cause. We all have the opportunity to make a difference in people's lives. There are so many options to consider – local, national, and international. The key thing is to get engaged with a cause that speaks to you. Many of you reading this have chosen to support AMICI (as I do) because you understand the importance of camp in a child's development.

For LUTW, the Pandemic has impacted our work tremendously. Our historic mode of operations and financing had centred around volunteer-based trips with corporate and academic partners. With Peru in lockdown, we had to cancel all our trips for 2020 and may in fact not be able to start trips again until the beginning of 2022. So, we made a pivot to work that can be done in the country without volunteers. We have always done a certain amount of non-volunteer trips, so we will look to develop more of those. We are also expanding two new ventures – Social Enterprise product sales and Training.

One of the amazing things during the Pandemic is that our sale of Social Enterprise products has grown significantly and helped to cover a significant part of our operating costs in Peru. These products include solar powered lights and small appliances for off-grid residences. I am also excited to share that we have entered into two new partnerships. One with a large Satellite TV provider in Peru. LUTW will install solar power facilities at 14 schools to provide educational content via satellite. We are just getting started with this project, but I can't wait to be able to travel to one of these locations and help with the install! The other is a tenyear partnership with Lambton College focused on Canada. We are starting this partnership with four remote facilities in Saskatchewan in support of the Saskatchewan Tribal Chiefs. We are working to expand this to other provinces and First Nations communities.

LUTW faces significant challenges, but I am excited about our ability to continue to make a difference!

As mentioned after Part 1 of Bill's article anyone wanting more information about Light Up The World can e-mail Bill at wemeeker1@gmail.com

BILL MEEKER
1968-75; 81



COVID-19 HITS THE WORLD - AND KILCOO (CONTINUED FROM COVER)

Jeff (Zippy) Kopas (1987-97) from Toronto

The pandemic? Yeah, it's just been...well weird hasn't it? It has been like a Ground Hog Day on the old Kilcoo ropes course, where on certain sections we just repeated the same section again and again, then napped for hours in the tree nets, occasionally bungee jumping off the Burma bridge, hitting the ground once or twice, getting knocked out and awoken by a curious circle of Ewok like trailblazers (true story) who then carry you back onto the course to repeat it all another time. My two professional worlds in many ways ground to a halt as film and TV production all but stopped, and real estate development soon followed. However, that also allowed for bandwidth to work on personal projects I had been wanting to do for many years, including a little documentary on Kilcoo Alum Peter Taylor, who spent much of the past summer doing an enormous painting at camp (for which I am still editing, sorry Pete). Actually I have spent more time at Kilcoo during the pandemic then I have since working there twenty years ago...and that has been a gift I am incredibly thankful for. Personally, it has been a big year as well! I got engaged, bought a new house in the Annex, shattered my collarbone Mountain Biking (with Kilcoo Alum Jeff Barret - it was his fault:), then more or less locking the door on said new house and moving to our cabin at Osler for the past few months, which has been in so many ways amazing. I would like to think the pandemic has helped me appreciate what I have, and every day I try to remind myself how just simply incredibly lucky I am. Just my network of Kilcoo friends alone is something I cherish more and more each passing pandemic day...or week, wait how long have I been writing this? What do I miss most? I miss frigen hugging people, we'll keep doing that right?



Zippy managing the pandemic

Bill Spence (1956-68) Waterloo Valley, New Hampshire

Although the pandemic has not affected my health or Colleen's health in that we have not contracted the disease, been admitted to a hospital or come close to death, I do know of at least one person who was on a ventilator for 14 weeks and is suffering today from the "long haul" effects of Covid.

Living in the US and having a business headquartered in Manhattan, Covid affected my work severely. Understandably, following the outbreak in New York City, our staff did not want to travel on public transit to a close-quartered work space in a building with recirculating HVAC. Bottom line, our office was permanently closed and everyone began working remotely. The business is digital, a website (BTRtoday.com), that creates entertainment content for the 13 to 28 demographic, which certainly contributed to our ability to survive; however, one of our most important suppliers withdrew service because their office building in NYC was closed. As well, digital advertising, on which we survive, dried up after the pandemic hit. The business came close to collapse.

In the US, the campaign to vaccinate has accelerated rapidly. Even rural states, such as New Hampshire where we live, are receiving supplies which has permitted an age and medical-need staged rollout. We obtained our first shot in late February and the second during the third week of March. Friends in New York and New Jersey have already received their second shot.

The years 2020 and 21 will be remembered as the plague of our generation; the year when many people died needlessly, the year the economy took an enormous hit which crippled some industries while allowing others to prosper; the year of isolation disorders; the year a pandemic became politicized; the year medical science produced several effective vaccines in record time; the year countries blamed one another and the year borders between neighbours were closed.



Bill with wife Colline

Don Wilson(1958-67) from Dos Corrientes, Ecuador



Don and Heather

Ecuador was particularly hard hit with the first wave of the virus. In the spring of 2020, many Ecuadorians who were residing in Spain began to return home as the virus was spreading in Europe. Unknowingly, they infected the country's largest city, Guayaquil and completely overran the unprepared healthcare system and facilities for the deceased. It became one of the worst hit cities in the world with international press covering the tragedy with news stories and photos. The government stepped in and basically shut the country down. International fights were stopped, a 2:00pm curfew was implemented, you could only use your car one day a week and the only businesses allowed to open were related to banking, healthcare, food and gasoline. All public places were off limits. All of this was enforced by the military. Ecuadorians have learned over the years from past history, not to fool around with those guys. After about three months the country slowly opened up and basically returned to normal. The spread of the virus levelled off, but not enough to save the life of a dear friend and partner to our project, a month ago.

Robert Amos (1958-1968) from Victoria, British Columbia

Things are good here in Oak Bay. My wife Sarah and I live in a seaside neighbourhood of Victoria, BC. With the guidance of our remarkable Provincial Public Health Officer our province, island and community have been somewhat sheltered from the pandemic. Even so, the elderly and educated citizens of Oak Bay take things very seriously. For a year now Sarah and I have not travelled at all, have socialized with no one but our local daughter and son-in-law (and at that, properly distanced) and do our provisioning by ordering on-line and picking up things in a contactless manner. That may sound harsh, but in fact we're quite used to it.

Both of us are artists, and this time without distraction in our studios has allowed us to get on with those projects we have been waiting for the time to "get around to". And, more and more, these days my work is writing art history books - I am the official biographer of Vancouver Island artist E. J. Hughes. Fortunately I had already travelled to do my research in Ottawa for my next book, E. J. Hughes: Canadian War Artist, when the pandemic hit, and so have had a year to write and polish my manuscript. I find I can easily email the manuscript for editing by other historians in preparation for publication.



Bob's Favourite pastime

Last year I thought that the "supply chain" would collapse and so began growing vegetables in earnest in our large yard. Now Victoria's early spring is upon us and the seeds are coming up. And to keep us amused, we are awaiting the delivery of a labradoodle puppy - someone to keep me company on daily walks.

I know that the majority of people have health and money and career and relationship issues to deal with, and these times have been difficult. But I'm not really ready to get back to "normal". In fact, this cocooned life suits me just fine.

Liz Adamson (2001-04) from Darwin, Australia

Life in Darwin (Northern Territory, Australia) over the past year has indeed been different, however much less so than most parts of the globe. Darwin has a population of approximately 130,000 (I find similarities to Thunder Bay) and 250,000 in the whole of the Northern Territory. Approximately one quarter of the NT population is made up of Indigenous/First Nations people.

Across most of Australia, the health impacts from Covid-19 have been much less severe than Canada. Up in the 'Top End' in Darwin, we have been even luckier, with no community transmission of the virus to date. Part of this 'luck' is due to early and strict national and state border restrictions that prevented any travellers from entering Darwin (and the whole Northern Territory) without a 14 day mandatory hotel quarantine. I feel guilty saying it, but our day-to-day life has really not changed. This is not something we take for granted; it's something we, as a family and community talk about and have continued to appreciate as the months have gone by. I am in awe of parents with young kids who have survived 'lockdown' with no school/child care, let alone trying to balance paid work responsibilities. I had a taste of it for three weeks, and that was enough for me!

The past year has encouraged us to spend more time with neighbours and our community, exploring our own 'back yard' (literally and figuratively), and (somewhat jokingly) questioning whether we will end up being the control sample for a long-term study about the social and mental health impacts on society. Despite this good fortune, it's still been a weird and challenging year in other respects - our third baby was born in June 2020, and we still have no idea when my family may be able to travel to visit. So, for now, we are enjoying and appreciating the easy living of staying close to home, and I continue to dream about the day we can get on a plane to Canada and see family and friends, including Kilcoo guys and gals.



Liz with Jake Heidi and infant Lucy

Tom Richmond (1958-71) from Airdrie, Alberta

On Sunday March 15th 2020, COVID-19 had its first impact on myself and my wife Jane. We were vacationing in Costa de Sol Spain and had completed our second week of what was to have been a five week stay. After relocating to the resort town of Estepona we checked into our accommodations and by midnight were preparing to checkout. At the time COVID was predominantly in Italy and had just started to appear in parts of Spain. We had had no issues with the virus until a day previous when were told to wash our hands frequently and avoid shaking hands.

The Canadian government was telling travellers to hasten home while we still had a chance. Tighter travel restrictions were being imposed without warning and the possibility of being stranded was quite real (although there are worse places). Thanks to the efforts of our travel agent, we managed to be on a plane to Dublin early the next morning. We were ticketed to board a flight to Chicago and then furtherance to Calgary the following day. Upon arrival in Dublin, the ticketing clerk informed us that the U.S. border was now closed to any traveller who was not in the possession of a U.S. passport. More calls to the travel agent. In the end we spent two nights in a Dublin hotel along with seven other Canadians. We were the only hotel guests. Here we were in Dublin on St. Patrick's Day, down the street was the Guinness brewery, and the city was virtually shut down! The next day we flew home thru Frankfurt and landed in Calgary where we were handed brochures telling us to self quarantine for the next fourteen days. All school classes from K-12 had been cancelled and would remain so indefinitely. Canadians were told to consider cancelling all non-essential travel. Long term care was being limited to all but essential visitors. It was becoming apparent that 2020 was turning into a year like no other.

Like families across the country, we had to abide by the health guidelines and refrain from giving and receiving hugs from grandchildren, children and friends. We have endured line ups at the Costcos of the world, watched community businesses struggle to remain open, some succeeding and many not so lucky.

Alberta had been hit with the perfect storm of bad economic times coupled with COVID. By late June restrictions were being relaxed as cases were dropping. Golf courses and other activities were cautiously being opened. For me the summer months and going into fall, life was somewhat normal. We took a drive to Squamish to visit our son Scott (former camper and Staff member) and his family. He was looking forward to going to Kitimat to work on a large LNG project that was under construction. (Scott was to find out later that due to COVID, the project site was virtually shut down).

Back at home, golf, sporting clays with my son Michael (former camper) and hunting in the fall were all possible.

However, our province began to experience sharp increases in cases and once again in early December there was a major shutdown of Alberta business. Bars, casinos, hair salons, and other selected businesses would have to close. Mandatory indoor masks, retail stores were restricted to 15 per cent of fire code occupancy. Indoor social gatherings were restricted.

There were criticisms over how the government had handled this second wave. By mid December the first vaccinations were being administered to health care workers. There seems to be a light at the end of the tunnel.

Christmas like everywhere else was difficult without family but we all seemed to get through it and the second go around of restrictions was almost part of a new normal.

The provincial government is once again easing some measures based on hospitalizations and watching closely the growth rates of variant cases. Like everyone else on the planet I am looking forward to resuming my life with family and friends. We are currently in step two of a four step process to return our lives to some sort of normalcy.

I am sure 2020 and a large part of 2021 will be remembered as a rolling dumpster fire. Negative news gets old pretty fast when it is heard day in and day out. One can only watch NETFLIX for so long. My bread making skills have improved considerably.

May we all be able to soon raise a glass with family and friends. See you at the reunion.



Tom in captivity in Ireland??

Gavin McIlwraith(1981-93) from Minato-ku Tokyo, Japan

Konnichiwa from Japan! I am wearing my government issued mask that barely covers my big foreigner nose, but after living in Japan for such a long time, I have learned that I am an oddball in this society and have grown to love all the cultural differences around me. Actually, wearing masks in public (especially on crowded trains) is commonplace and something we all have been doing here for years and years so I'm not sure why Prime Minister Abe decided to send everyone a mask during Covid. Regardless, I think the impact of Covid in Japan has been better in some ways and worse in others when comparing to people in other countries.

On the negative side of things, space is so tight in Tokyo that when offices, schools and restaurants shutdown in the spring of 2020 people had few places to go and were understandably frustrated. Everyone was feeling the pain. Since the typical Japanese office worker normally works long hours and then goes out after work with colleagues, it was hard for most of them to get used to being around their families in tiny quarters all the time. For us, living with 2 growing kids in a tiny 2 bedroom apartment in downtown Tokyo was already quite tight, but when our place also became our classroom, gym, office, karaoke box and campground it was quite an adjustment. We were constantly rearranging the living room furniture for on-line gym classes, Zoom meetings, Cub Scout fort building, indoor camping, classroom lessons etc.. And when we did get outside, in a short amount of time we realized that we knew every walking path, temple, shrine, park, swing, sign, billboard, vending machine, blade of grass and crack in the pavement within a few km radius of our place. Our scooters and blade-boards got a lot of use last spring! People in Tokyo, including us, held out hope that the Olympics would still take place and our tickets wouldn't be wasted, but eventually that reality withered away as well. But by far the biggest disappointment of the Covid impact during spring 2020 was learning that our flights to Canada and summer camp sessions would be cancelled. I remember listening to the live interview that Lub gave on TV discussing the situation and somehow hoped he could save the day as he always does, but it wasn't to be. Still now, despite the progress with vaccines we are growing more and more worried that camp again might not be in session for summer 2021.

Interestingly though, and on the positive side, the summer of 2020 in Japan was better as the government developed a campaign called "Go to travel" that actually encouraged people to travel the country and gave monetary coupons as incentive. It was a confusing policy and we weren't sure whether or not we should take advantage of the opportunity, but after spending all spring indoors we decided to give it a try and we were so glad we did. We were able to visit many wonderful historical sites in Kyoto and Nara and enjoy incredible scenery and hot springs in Hokkaido without the usual throng of tourists from around the world. That campaign was followed up in the Fall with a "Go to Eat" campaign that gave monetary credits for eating out at restaurants across the big cities and we found ourselves taking advantage of that opportunity as well. Even though we ate many meals at odd times to avoid other people, we really enjoyed the chance to eat cheaply at some great restaurants near our place and introduce so much interesting food to our kids. By fall, schools were back in session albeit with lots of restrictions and temperature checks and fewer school activities, but that was a big turning point for people in Japan as parents finally got some relief. But some companies continued to encourage "telework" as they call it here and I'm sure some people will continue this situation for all of 2021.

Currently, the situation is a lot better in Japan and I dare to say mostly back to normal, excluding the slow vaccine roll-out. Only the Pfizer vaccine is approved, but people are eager to get it and get back to living their lives. Like everyone, we also look forward to putting this trying chapter behind us, but at the same time I will certainly remember this situation and make sure I do a better job at living in the moment like I learned from my years at Kilcoo. All the best my Kilcoo friends!

Jeff MacDonald (1975-1984) from Athens, Greece

Greetings to all from Athens, Greece!

I think the best way to describe life during this COVID pandemic is as if someone had pushed the 'pause' button on life. I was hit with this overwhelming sense, while recently looking through old photos, and realized that over the past year, my family and I have sadly little to show, (compared to our normally busy lives full of adventures, trips, athletic competitions, etc.). And yet, while we have not exactly been 'living life to the fullest' lately, I can safely say that I will cherish the closeness and extended time that I have enjoyed with my family. As tough as this strange experience has been, especially for our kids who stare at their screens for 8 hours a day, denied a normal social life, at least my wife and I have been close by to



Noriko, Natalie, Sydney, Gavin



Phaedra, Neteli, Jeff, Panorea & Nestor

remind them of how it's all about one's attitude when faced with challenging times. On a basic level of course,

I am extremely thankful that myself, and all those who I know are healthy. In fact, the beauty of life in Greece is that, even before the pandemic, many aspects of our daily routines still ran in a very traditional way. Twice a week, from the 'Laiki Agora' (street markets) that set up in our neighbourhood, we enjoy access to the freshest fruits and vegetables, picked right off the trees nearby. I have also learned to love the deeply ingrained, Greek sense of community, with a very loyal network of family and friends always ready to help. Despite the pandemic, the street scenes of kids playing soccer on the steps of the local church, with the elders leaning on their canes, (and wearing masks) watching on persist, as if taken straight from a scene from "Cinema Paradiso." Of course, being Canadian and having grown up with a network of lifelong Canadian friends and family (including many fellow Kilcooites), my spirit will always long to return. As our son Nestor, after a long, 2 year wait, plans to head up for his 1st year as LIT at Kilcoo this summer, I can watch the next generation lead yet another generation of eager young kids, with pride and gratitude.

Steve Cairns (1984-99;2015-19) from Bracebridge, Ontario

The early indications of January 2020 suggested a big problem was coming. At that time I was travelling to Toronto for coursework at YorkU and crashing at my folks place (yes a bit scary in my 50th year). We talked about stopping homecare for mom and if we had enough oatmeal for winter… Soon after spring classes were cancelled, and my folks barricaded themselves at the cottage. My sister became a primary care provider and I filled in with weekly visits replacing homecare. While it has been challenging, we are very fortunate to have this option when we think about the many who have faced the COVID in nursing homes. My daughter says it that way, 'the COVID', like it's something that gets you. Anyway going back and forth from my family with three kids and two dogs to my folks place is always a bit of a shakedown, but being able to help them and connecting with my sister has been a very special part of this past year.

In personal terms, I think of the COVID as a bad country song which is useful if you're into self-deprecative humour. Cancelled flights and conferences, online classes, and lockdowns; even the book club I'm skipping to write this, it's a pretty small fiddle playing in my virtual background. I am fortunate beyond measure, particularly in my memories of family and friends. And it's often the camp friends who reach out, in messages and calls. I was able to help Sammy Baldwin with a hoarding issue through Zoom and I have a lot of satisfaction from that. While I can't seem to coordinate the time change to reach Jamie Campbell in Switzerland, I have connected or reconnected with folks from Kilcoo. If there is one thing that really bothered me this past year it was how many kids and staff missed out on summer camp memories in 2020. I am thrilled to hear camp is back, which is a good sign of normalcy returning. This summer I hope they party like it's 1999, or something similar through social distancing?! Magical squares? The Cone of Silent Spaces? Don't worry Lub, you got this!



A good year for solo ice fishing with Rodan and Chewy

Mike Gorman (2002-2013) from Bedford, Nova Scotia

In November 2018 I moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia (Bedford to be more specific). I did this as my girlfriend had been recruited to work there, a dream job you could say. She is from Pictou, Nova Scotia and opportunities to come home for work are sometimes few and far between for Maritimers. In April 2019 she became my fiancé and our future on the east coast was starting to take shape. A summer 2020 wedding was the goal and we were very excited for what the next year was to hold for us.

Record Scratch COVID 19

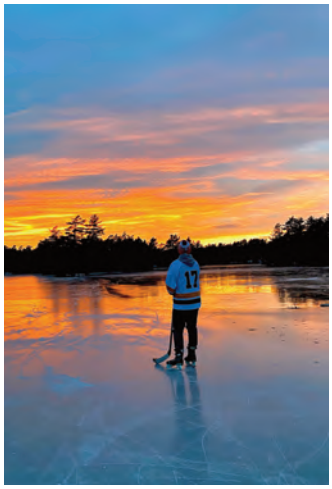
In March 2020 we went into lockdown with the rest of the country. We were both very fortunate to be able to work from home. However, now the idea of asking family and friends to travel for what would essentially be a large indoor gathering did not seem prudent.

Living on the east coast has been great. Our province implemented some of the strictest COVID protocols and due to that our case numbers and spread have been minimal and controllable (it also helps that the province is essentially a peninsula with only one border). Our bubble has felt safe and life is pretty much back to normal.

The negative is that as someone "from away", as they say out here, has and can be a little lonely. Our first year in Nova Scotia we were able to travel back to Ontario 4 times for various vacations, weddings and events. It's been almost 18 months since I've seen my family and friends from back home in person.

2020 to us will be remembered as a year we were able to figure out what was important to us. Grateful for what we do for a living, grateful for where we live and how safe we feel and grateful that we have each other.

2021 will be what 2020 was supposed to be, wedding and all. And if 2020 has given us a better perspective and me a few more grey hairs, we're happy with that.



Mike on the ice in Nova Scotia

Mac Langford (1954-56) from Washington State

We are staying pretty much alone on an island of about 2500 people 1 1/2 hours north of Seattle. Even though we have qualified by age for some time, we only received the Johnson and Johnson vaccine recently.

Frank Seidel(1952-54) from California

I have not been affected except for constantly being asked about it. It's terrible some friends and family have been involved but nothing critical. I accept what comes and do my best to deal with it. I hold everyone in prayer knowing the Holy Spirit will prevail. I choose not to dwell on it.

Mike Adamson (1979-97) from Toronto, Ontario

I have the good fortune of teaching at The Sterling Hall School in Toronto, working with 3 fellow Kilcoo senior staff alum. Fellow teachers Scott Davis (1981-2000) and Sean Mitchell (1986-99) keep my spirits high with their incredible enthusiasm. And our principal, Rick Parsons (1980-94), along with his admin team, has done a remarkable job of leading our school through this pandemic. When we arrived back from March Break in 2020, we were suddenly thrust into remote teaching with no preparation, training or supplies. It was a huge learning curve, but we did it. The children had a great end to their year.

This year, we have been switching from in school learning to remote learning (and sometimes a mix of both). But we are prepared and offer robust programs for both. The health and safety protocols worked well and the boys at our school were fantastic and safe.

I was reminded of a summer in the 80's when it rained almost every day. We ran out of rainy day activities after a week. You can only play Spoons in the Lodge for so long! So the staff got creative and planned incredible activities. Many campers said it was their best summer ever, despite the rain. This school year has been similar. The pandemic is happening. Our job is to give the children the best year we can so they will look back at 2020-21 as their best school year ever!

Jamie Campbell (1985-97) from Basel, Switzerland

Greetings from Basel, Switzerland!

We've been living in this alpine wonderland for the past 5 years after work took me here to dive into the healthcare/ pharmaceutical world. Our central location has allowed us to explore many countries across Europe and we have taken full advantage of having the Alps less than an hour away where we are constantly visiting to ski, hike and explore the beautiful alpine villages. It has been a great experience and our 9-year-old daughter is now a seasoned skier, traveler, and linguist. I remember back to my Kilcoo days being so envious of the kids flying in from Europe for the month of camp and wondering what life they lived. Well, Morgan will be one of those kids when we are back to normal and travelling again!

While we live across the Atlantic, home is (or was) never far away with frequent trips back to Ontario to visit friends and family -- Dad, Paul Turner, also a Kilcoo alum. In particular, I make one special trip home each year in the deep of winter for my annual pilgrimage to Kilcoo to visit my dear friends and 'brothers in sweat' of Kilcoo Sauna Club fame. Yes, in the thick of winter, us crazy Canucks have a special weekend up at camp and visit our sacred sauna on the shores of Gull Lake (I miss you brothers and will again see you one day soon!)

Like everyone, the last year has been REALLY tough. In addition to being 'locked down' in Switzerland we have had to be more or less in isolation due to daughter Morgan's immunosuppression as a result of her heart transplant at age 4. However, we keep moving forward, with smiles and the positive 'can do' attitude that I largely attribute to my years at Kilcoo as a camper and staff. Camp is never far away as our walls are lined with special Peter Taylor paintings depicting the Canadian northland with my special painting of Chapel Point sitting above me as I write this note. Frequent texts, emails and zoom calls (that's you Stevie) with special camp friends keep me upbeat and reminding me that we are all in this together! We are making the most out of it and grateful for the small family outings we can do to the Black Forest and outdoor cross-country ski and hiking trails nearby.

I started camp back in 1985, Lub's first year as a director I believe, and years later I still find myself humming camp songs (one day singing to Morgan while hiking in Zermatt I realized Vreneli WAS from Switzerland and I indeed lived in a house of wood and stone!), reminiscing about campfire stories, remembering special counsellors and reminding myself I CAN be a good father as everything I learned about teaching kids was as a Pathfinder counsellor. As the weeks and months go by, I find myself thinking about Kilcoo a lot and my old memories and friendships come alive as if they were just yesterday. The Kilcoo Magic is still alive and well in this old kid and it seems to be helping me get through these crazy times!

Once things are back to normal, I would like to invite any of you visiting Switzerland to reach out - you will have a friendly face to tour you around, guide you on some off piste ski adventures or cook you fondue! I would love to hear from old friends, please email at jdcamp2015@gmail.com. Rip Ram! Jamie



Jamie with Cindy and Morgan

Pat Sainsbury (2009-2019) from Toronto

When I returned from the Kilcoo Nahanni River Trip in 2019 I was optimistic about my future opportunities in Toronto. I had just recently received a job offer in the Wine & Spirits industry after a year of soul-searching. Coincidentally, I received the offer after attending the Kilcoo 'waterfront overnight' as an honorary Waterfront Veteran. I still remember the sense of disbelief as I shouted to the younger Kilcoo staff members that I had gotten the job. There was an optimism about that fall that I felt was shared among my peers. Then the pandemic hit at the beginning of last year. That spring, I remember celebrating birthdays over Zoom, with someone inevitably mentioning: "Don't worry, we'll share a few beers next month when things open up". Soon it became clear the pandemic was not going away. Brief zoom calls and walks with friends and family became what I looked forward to the most at the end of each week. There was a sense that although we all felt isolated, we relied on each other to keep spirits high, whether it was a short phone call or even just a text or email.



Pat with Knowles, Sherwood and Graham

Now the pandemic has been in action for over a year, and I have more experience working in my industry with COVID-19 than without it. Along with this came a fundamental change in the way our business operated. Restaurant sales were completely wiped away as places were forced to shut down or cut staff to survive. While our on-premise sales suffered, people seem to be drinking more than ever from the LCBO (I think we can all understand why). Our direct-to-consumer business flourished as customers in isolation looked for wines that could be delivered safely to their door. So much changed in my industry in a matter of months. No longer were suppliers coming from overseas to visit LCBO stores and restaurants to give their unique perspective on their wines. Instead, they educated us over Zoom. I couldn't help but feel I was missing out on the fascinating conversations that can only happen when you're face to face with someone.

Vaccines are now rolling out steadily here in Toronto and our long-term care homes and most vulnerable members are almost 100% vaccinated. There is hope that vaccinations will be widely available by the fall (and perhaps even earlier!). The question is, how long until we can return to the true normalcy we knew before COVID-19? What can be said is that the light at the end of the tunnel is getting brighter and brighter every day. I long to return to Kilcoo and celebrate with the other alumni and staff members, to link arms and sing songs with my comrades in the lodge.

For many, 2020 was a year of strained mental health, self-reflection and revaluation. For me, I found out how important exercise is in influencing my mental health, and that getting away from the screen for an hour a day can have a huge impact on my mood. Now more than ever I am grateful for the connection I have to Kilcoo. The sense of community that I share with my Kilcoo brothers and sisters has been invaluable during the pandemic as it has given me a network of people to connect with when I needed someone the most. I'm looking forward to reuniting with these life-long friends on the shores of Gull Lake in the not-to-distant future!

Jim Barker (1974-84) from Missouri City, Texas

Living in Houston Texas since 2003 aside from three years in the Middle East. 2020 was Hell with the pandemic and in 2021 Hell froze over down here. Houston doesn't handle the cold well versus my camp alumni living in Canada! Houston has responded well to the pandemic since the start. The numbers spiked hard but the mind set has always been to keep things moving and open where possible. Both of my kids continued to go to school with a lot of additional safeguards in place. Testing and the vaccine roll-out has been handled well here. They are still in the 1A and B phases but a number of my friends who aren't in these classification ranges have received one of the vaccines.

The pandemic had a huge initial impact on the oil and gas business I work in. It continues to affect things although the political climate is having a larger impact now on driving prices back up. Houston completely understands that high oil prices, despite gas impacts, are good for the city.

This was the first year since Monica and I have been married where my Mom and step-dad haven't wintered in Houston to play golf and get out of the St. Catharines cold and snow. Getting across the border and the Canadian insurance restrictions made it impossible for them. We can't travel up there either with the hotel and quarantine mandates despite the testing. I had wanted to get up there this summer and hopefully swing by camp but I'm not optimistic. Excited to see everyone at the next reunion whenever that is in a perfect world!!



Zach (13), Monica, Jim, Isabella (15)

Murray Wickwire(1975-1990) from Hillsborough, North Carolina

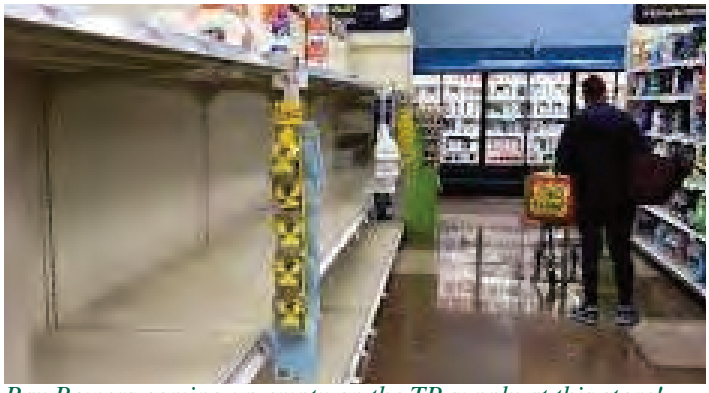
March 23, 2020 was the day I packed up what I needed from my office and headed home to work for the next three months. I was lookig forward to this change of pace. The commute would be a breeze. I'd be home for lunch every day and actually take an hour off rather than work through lunch as I usually did. I would be safe from coming in contact with this covid virus thing. My family took this in stride and it meant we wouldn't be together much during this time.

Where I am in North Carolina, folks here panic when some sort of major event is forecast. When storms or tornadoes are headed our way, people joke about the run on bread and milk at the grocery stores. Now if you go to the grocery store, before such events, believe me, the bread aisle will indeed be bare and there will be no milk. I am not sure what they do with all this bread and milk. I guess folks here like to be prepared with plenty of both. Now with the covid pandemic making itself present in North America, bread and milk left the grocery store like it usually did. This time folks added toilet paper to the list. My neighbors panicked because they were worried they would not have enough toilet paper. Family members called one another to check on each other's inventory. In short order, grocery stores, corner stores, any store where you might purchase toilet paper was sold out. Even the big box stores like Walmart, Target, Costco and Sam's club –no toilet paper, all gone. It seemed to me not only were people afraid of catching the virus but everyone panicked about wiping as well.

Gratefully, I have to say that so far he pandemic has had no tragic effect on those close to me. Grandkids got sent home from college. One of our grandkids ended up living with us for three months. Her mother and her youngest brother are living in Chennai where she teaches at an international school and where her brother goes to school. They were locked down and required to stay at home. . Essentials were being delivered but they were expected not to leave the house for any reason. We had family Zoom calls to consider whether they should leave India.

In the end, they decided to stay hoping things would return to normal. Prior to the shutdown, many school families had left for spring break. The shutdown of air travel meant students and their families could not get back to India. This being an international school required a quick switch to online classes which posed its own unique set of problems given that students were from all over and living in different time zones. Two members of our family took ill with covid but both recovered at home. There was no travel to Canada so getting back to Nova Scotia was not possible. My sister in Halifax was cut off from us which continues to be difficult.

I imagine anyone reading this knows about the chaos the pandemic created in the United States. There is no point in going into all this! Needless to say, it was a chaotic and confusing time given what we were hearing from the new media. Remember the Bleach! We ought not to forget about the terrible loss of life and the lingering effects being experienced by those who have "recovered" from the illness the virus created. The good news is we now have vaccines to help deal with this pandemic. I'm grateful for those who worked on developing this major breakthrough. As an aside, one of the scientists who was a major contributor towards the creation of the Pfizer vaccine grew up in our little town here is North Carolina. I am grateful for those who helped look after those who became ill. Today is March 23, 2021 and we are all facing a very different normal With fingers crossed let's hope Kilcoo will be alive this summer with people having fun and making friends just like always and the KYBOs will have toilet paper! Rim Ram folks, I'm off to get my first vaccine shot!



Ray Bowers coming up empty on the TP supply at this store!

REMEMBERING PETER MAYBURY

Regrettably, Kilcoo has lost another legend with the death of Peter Maybury (1966-72) who died in Haliburton on April 14 from All Systems Ataxia. He had been in declining health for four years.

So many of you have expressed your thoughts be they comedic, nostalgic, descriptive and/or narrative, clearly showing that from those who knew him, sum up Peter in a nutshell. Here are but a few of those tributes:

" A giant"; "a good friend to all"; "worthy of respect"; "larger than life in presence and manner"; " ready to take on all comers"; "didn't like those who wouldn't go into the corners"; "a life well lived, sometimes beyond the limits"; "funny, crazy beyond words"; "always all in"; "skated through life embracing all with humour and love."

Now 'Mayfield', 'Mabes', 'Maybones', 'Petesy' joins in with Sling, Stoney, and too many other great alumni and The Chief with their favourite beverage of choice. We have now lost three Kilcoo-Opeongo Old Farts in three years. We, like you, will miss Peter, a truly wonderful guy, but will remember him fondly. He is in excellent company.

PETER OYLER
1960-66

IDEAS ALWAYS WELCOME!

The Gull Rock Gazette is always looking for your favourite Kilcoo memories and stories. If you need help to develop your ideas, please contact us by email at gazetteeditor@kilcoo.com, and we will help you.



2 dogs but no campers



Visitors' Feast but no visitors

KILCOO MUSEUM ON HOLD

I don't think many of you will be surprised to hear that our plans for a Kilcoo Historical Museum are on hold. Primarily due to the Covid 19 pandemic lumber prices have skyrocketed, copper prices are at an all time high and supply chain issues make material access somewhat uncertain. In future Gazette issues we will keep you updated.

REUNION OR NO REUNION

Ontario is in the midst of a health crisis and consequently we cannot at this time predict if camps will operate this summer nor can we guess at this time if we will be able to hold our alumni reunion. As we get closer to June we will be updating all those alumni who would like to attend. If you plan to participate or would like to attend please e-mail me at pchamp@sympatico.ca to be placed on the update list. Many of you who are on the list already need not respond to this no-tice.

FINAL THOUGHTS

This issue of the Gazette is unique in both length and nature. As I assembled the personal accounts about the affects of this virus I was struck by how it has disrupted lives so pervasively and in the past few months I have had contact with a few of you for whom the last 14 months have been devastating. The 4 camp directors in our midst have demonstrated their passion for the mental health of children and for them and for all of you I sincerely hope we can emerge from this dark period with a minimum of long term "wounds". I am sure everyone has a story to tell and the ending is yet to be told.



Hoping for 2021

REMEMBERING ROB LEPAGE

For those of you who spent summers at Kilcoo you may remember the Lepage family from Etobicoke. Rob started at Kilcoo in 1963. We have just been informed that he passed away on April 9th after an eight year battle with cancer. From the family a description of Rob said he enjoyed people and adventure as much as anyone. His natural warmth and generosity rewarded him with a huge circle of friends.

SPREAD THE WORD

Alumni, from our data base of over 1200 former camp staff and campers we have over 150 whose current e-mails we do not have. A few of them are even members of families of alumni whose e-mails we do have. PLEASE, PLEASE, check with those you know and if they would like to receive this issue of the Gazette and future issues, tell them to e-mail me at pchamp@sympatico.ca Let's all stay connected