THE GULL ROCK GAZETTE

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LATE WINTER ICE STORM ATTACKS KILCOO

For many of us, news reports of the late winter ice storm that hit the Haliburton area gave us a limited view from a distance, but the impact of the storm and its images were both scary and vivid as described in this account by Stu Armstrong, Kilcoo's Outdoor Education Director.

I arrived at Kilcoo ahead of the rest of the Advance Camp staff just after Easter, as I usually do, taking a few quiet days to enjoy some peace on Gull Lake before the chaos of spring and to make sure all the keys still work. I had heard about the ice storm before I came, but nothing could have prepared me for what I drove into.

Some arborists had already been on-site for three days, and they hadn't made a dent. As I pulled into camp it truly looked like a war had been fought there. The driveway was flanked by felled trees, cleared just enough to let cars pass. All I could think was, "Damn, that's a lot of firewood we've got to chop.

As I walked through camp, I began to take in the damage. The first thing I noticed was the sheer volume of branches covering nearly every inch of camp, even in places with no trees nearby. It was as if someone had gone out of their way to blanket the entire property.

Then I noticed the trees, or what was left of them. Several large ones had been blown over near the Rec Hut, their roots pointing awkwardly up into the air. Amazingly, despite their size and potential for destruction, they had landed quietly, away from any buildings. A few weren't so lucky. One large branch punched a sizeable hole in the Rec Hut roof, and another had speared straight through The Longhouse. If anyone had been sleeping there, it would have been a rough wake-up call.

The Rec Hut and Longhouse had the most obvious damage, but a few camper cabins weren't spared. Cabins 5 and 7 both had branches fall on them, though Kent and Wilson (camp property management and maintenance team) quickly made repairs before our first group arrived. It wasn't until later in the spring that I noticed the LIT cabin had a single stick protruding from the roof like a lone porcupine quill.

What amazed me most was how little damage there actually was considering the number of trees that had come down. With so many buildings scattered around camp, it was incredible that more hadn't been hit.









Eventually I made my way to the lodge feeling a bit anxious. With all those trees perched above it on the cliff, and after seeing so many downed across camp, I expected the worst. But my anxiety was unfounded. The lodge had escaped major damage. There were plenty of branches down on the western side, but none had reached the building itself.

The beach, however, told a different story. It looked as though the lake had donated its branches to our waterfront. You couldn't even see the sand under the layers of debris.

As I continued walking around I noticed piles of wood scattered everywhere, in between cabins, beside bathrooms, across paths. Wood was anywhere and everywhere. I'd seen it from a distance so I wasn't too worried, but I still had to check. Sticks were everywhere on the path to Chapel Point and some had even washed up onto the rocks, but the Peace Tree was still standing tall.

The arborists stayed for another week, clearing dead hangers and widow-makers and chipping what they could. They made a huge dent in the mess during their short time here, but other clients needed them too, so they moved on. We ended up renting our own chipper for a few days to finish off the bigger piles. By the time the rest of the Advance Camp staff showed up it was starting to look like camp, but we still had more work cut out for us. I thought the best way to show them the damage when they first arrived was to bring them around for a game of frisbee golf. We all had personal best rounds, probably because of the lack of trees.

STU ARMSTRONG
2007-2025

TINGLES' TAKE

A message from the director

Greetings Kilcoo Alumni,

The seasons are changing, the leaves have fallen, the cold November rain has blown into Haliburton County, and it is now time to look back. The campers, LITs and Staff all contributed to a unique, memorable, exciting and very hot 94th summer on Gull Lake. From the opening days of July to the Bushpede, from hot August nights, to the epic Olympic Tug-of-War, the memories are timeless. The creativity displayed by the staff during the Olympics and the end of August was a testament to their hard work and character. Glow sticks, tea lights, wind machines, and more!

The experience of speaking to our Campers, LITs and Staff at the Final Banquets was one I don't take lightly and I tried my best to wrap up our time at camp at the end of each month. They will remain our own special experiences; to try and sum them up here is an impossible task. Just try and think back to your own summers, from your own hat full of memories. It wasn't too far off, the same songs and the same special place.

We had an incredible, beautiful, and hope filled autumn at Kilcoo, highlighted by three special weekends, and the soaring Blue Jays around camp and beyond.

Alumni/Daughter Weekend was a unique chance for guys to bring their daughters up to camp. We had a vast age range, which was really cool, and everyone did their best to experience all that Kilcoo had to offer, with 10-year-old and 30-something daughters all tackling the Aerial Park and more! The campfire was highlighted by some songs & skits from some of the different camps that the girls had been to, with some awesome participation across the board.



Family Camp Group

Family Camp was a raucous affair, kids of all ages from families new and familiar. They got a real sense of fall Camping with some frosty nights where you definitely needed a toque on your head! The days were bright and sunny, and called for a camp like activity rotation of cabin groups and friendly neighbours. The return of Family Camp after a decade or so was a big success, and we hope it will return very soon.

Finally, Father/Son Weekend had some of the best weather late September could deliver. Even on Sunday morning before Chapel, guys were out in the sail boats trying for one last mission around Gull Rock. I was able to share the weekend with my nephew and brother-in-Law, and old cabin mates and friends from years gone by.



Alumnus Michael Balders with sons Lee & Hugh

Thanks for all the fathers, uncles, grandfathers and campers that made it special.

The weekends had similar structure, but they all had their own unique vibe and character. Some folks had never been to camp before, some hadn't been in decades, and some were back for multiple 2025 experiences! We are so thankful for their participation and making September so special. We had a number of different staff members come up to help the Post Camp crew with the weekends, and I am thankful for their contribution, hard work, and love of Kilcoo.



Pat with nephew Lars

The Post Camp Crew of Stu Armstrong, Wyatt Ground, Kyle Setterington and Michael Turnbull spearheaded all the weekends, from the ones mentioned above to the smaller private rentals and school groups. These guys, of course along with the indispensable Kent Taylor and Chris "Wilson" Wilson, put camp to bed over the weeks of October. Kent and Wilson will continue through November and beyond, to close camp down and start the numerous annual repair tasks and winter management.

Thanks to those alumni who dropped by through the summer, who sent along kind words of encouragement to us all, and who participated in the fall weekends. Notably, a big thanks to Paul Chamberlain for his continued leadership, with the Gull Rock Gazette, with the alumni, with our Redstone Program during the summer, and for his annual pre-camp address to the staff and LITs. Our community is very lucky to have Paul and his breadth of care and knowledge.

All the best from everyone at Kilcoo, to our alumni, for a fulfilling end of 2025, and a fruitful start of 2026.

CHEERS,
PATRICK TINGLEY – "TINGLES"

EDITOR'S MUSINGS

On my first trip up to Kilcoo in late June this year I became so aware of how our lives are subject to Nature's whims. Driving along highways 48 and 35, I saw numerous bundles of tree limbs piled on the shoulder awaiting pickup, and the closer I got to the Kilcoo gates I observed many trees broken or levelled. It did not take Stu Armstrong's article in this issue to make me aware and the passage of July and August punctuated things clearly as we went from heavy rain to hot dry days and emergency runs to cabin groups' trip campsites to provide gas powered cookstoves when fire bans were announced. Then at the end of August as I travelled north to Algonquin Park with fellow alumni Peter Oyler, Ken Jones and Terry Patterson we saw the complete devastation in the south arm of Lake Opeongo, the result of a summer tornado.

These observations seem to run counter to the sense of peace exhibited in Mike Hatton's article which I am sure will stir fond memories of canoe trips through Haliburton and Algonquin that many of you experienced. This experience in Mike's article became an important part of his life and made me think of a comment made by Don Wilson when a group of alumni met earlier this month(see the last page report) when he said as our lives continue we don't have much in common but at the same time we have so much in common because of our Kilcoo experience.

Climate change - - - there seem to be so many clues, not accepted by all people. I look at the photo of the Gull Lake shoreline taken by Doug Caldwell on November 6th and wonder if that is part of this change or is it merely due to decisions by water resources management in our province, but I hope the water levels come back up before campers venture out in canoes next July or contemplate a jump from the top of the tower.

Kilcoo 2025 was a little different: a few cabins empty due to the financial stresses on children's camps generally, but it was so much the same. As Pat expresses in his director's report the staff, while young compared to some earlier decades, were energetic, dedicated, and directed their incredible enthusiasm to make 2025 a memorable summer for campers. Looking hopefully to 2026



Gull Lake early October

and beyond I place trust in the great success of the Wanderer's program which introduced six year old children to Kilcoo for five nights. It was inaugurated for one August session and was so successful that in 2026 it will be implemented for two sessions in both July and August.

I appreciate the fact that so many alumni have felt the need, despite busy lives, to maintain a connection to Kilcoo. It certainly resonates with me as it did this summer. While working with one LIT group on Ruth's Island I talked with one whose grandfather, David Holmes, was a camper on my 1965 canoe trip to northwestern Ontario. Maybe, just maybe, Kilcoo will be forever. Certainly it is within us.

PAUL CHAMBERLAIN

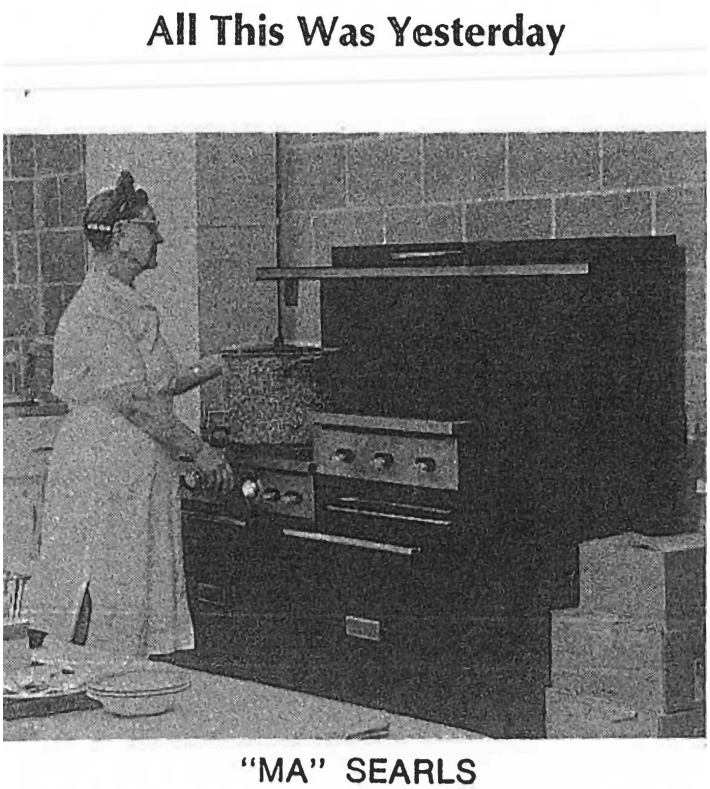


Gull Lake early November

KILCOO'S WOODSTOCK CONNNECTION – PART 2

In 1966, in addition to Ma Searles & her experienced kitchen staff, Terry Patterson and Joe Warwick were staff holdovers with Woodstock connections. As we learned in the article written by Bob Middaugh & Terry Patterson in the spring 2024 issue, the connection arose out of circumstances occasioned by the closing of the Woodstock Y's long operating summer camp for boys, Fisher's Glen, in 1962.

The crown jewel in terms of Kilcoo's recruitment was Ma Searles (Chief referred to her as Trudy) & her food services staff who had for many years provided similar services for Fisher's Glen Camp. Ma was revered by campers & staff alike at Fisher's Glen. Ma had an infectious personality that captured hearts & her gentle (& sometimes not so gentle) guidance earned her the name "Ma". She most loved those that needed it & fed everyone above expectations. Ma was the first line of defense when it came to dealing with homesick campers and our best girl as we watched out for her needs to ensure that she didn't try to lift something too heavy in exchange for the all important 4th meal which at that age & stage was coveted. My sixth year at Fisher's Glen Camp was in 1961. I was 15 years old at that point & part of a group that was officially in the Y's leadership training program. We had been in training for 3 years & in 1961, seven members of the program signed up for a 2 week stint at the camp. We fashioned ourselves as the Y's boys & were allowed to pitch our own tent in a location of our choice within the Camp's boundaries and did so as close to the edge of the bluff along Lake Erie as we dared. We spent our time at camp filling the staffing holes, including transforming the 10 acres of hay field to playing fields and pathways and then after the campers arrived on the activity staff. We provided a link to the senior campers, some of them nearly as old as we were.



"MA" SEARLS

Those of us who eventually found our way to Kilcoo had specific responsibilities. Has Joe Warwick told any of you that he was in charge of the horseback riding program at Fisher's Glen? I'll leave that to Joe and another time except to say that it was very popular. Less popular but more fundamental to the camping experience was my responsibility to provide a campcraft program. That year the campers learned everything one might want to know about the ironwood tree. It proved to be a difficult subject and just harvesting one took most of the first week. I'll let Joe tell you the rest of that story as well. I had expected to be part of the waterfront staff but I guess they were having challenges finding something for Ian McAskile's brother, Pete, to do and gave him the waterfront program.

By 1966, and arising from arrangements Joe Warwick made for me, I arrived at Kilcoo and spent the summer where I was comfortable on the Waterfront staff. I roomed with the late, great, Derek Allen, and we were surprisingly compatible. Also surprising to me at the time, Ian McAskile joined Kilcoo's staff as a counsellor. Early on Scott Kennedy introduced himself to me. Scott's family had moved to Woodstock and had prior connections to Kilcoo and then much to my delight we were joined by Lesley Johnson who had somehow found her way onto Ma Searle's staff. Lesley was a public school mate of mine and over many years post Kilcoo her sisters, Cathy & Susie & brother, Peter participated in Woodstock's swimming program which I managed.

So by 1966 the connection to Woodstock had grown considerably and in many ways, particularly through, Ma Searles, Joe Warwick, Ian McAskile & myself had been directly tied back to the Woodstock Y & to Fisher's Glen Camp.

Regrettably, Fisher's Glen Camp closed in 1962 due to an inability to meet the requirements of Norfolk County's Health Unit. Just as interesting is that the Woodstock Y relocated to a newly built facility around the same time but struggled mightily to stay afloat and pay off the building debt and operate programs. It was not until 1968 when the Y became the benefactor of a large bequest from Dr. Weston Krupp that the Woodstock Y again found its' stride. In 1968 I was appointed the Y's first Aquatic Director. I stayed in the position 1 year & was allowed to continue to manage a similar program for the City of Woodstock including coaching both swim teams before heading to Law School in 1969.

Ma Searles died in 1969. She had not been active in the kitchen at the new Y while I worked there but she was succeeded by her daughter, Kay, who gave me and my swim teamers free run of the kitchen particularly after early morning practices. I am not sure if Kay ever made it to Kilcoo as part of Ma's staff but she was very much like Ma.

The 1966 season at Kilcoo was a very special experience for me and had to rate as a pretty good season overall for the camp. Chief had hit his stride and most of the greats that we reminisce about or hear from had some association with the camp at that time. I was struck by some of the similarities of Kilcoo and Fisher's Glen. Make no mistake, Fisher's Glen was no Kilcoo,



but the leadership goals and message were similar as was the framework of the daily program. Fisher's Glen had been led for many years and in fact was developed by Cap Pierce. He was the "chief" there from 1912 until his death in 1955 after which the Woodstock Y' senior leadership team carried on in Cap's tradition. Another strong Y supporter was Woodstock businessman, Duff McLellan. He rarely missed a season at Fisher's Glen and ran the religious studies and chapel program. Duff also contributed an additional 5 acres to the basic camp property and but for his bad habit of swimming straight out into the lake and floating around unattended he was a wonderful role model for the many campers whose lives he influenced.

As would be expected with Ma Searles so influential at Fisher's Glen, the one facility that was comparable to Kilcoo was the dining hall. It was large enough and well enough equipped to hold the entire camp whether it be for meals or rainy day programs. It had a large stage at one end that allowed for lots of creativity and theatre. Similarly, the camp fire program in the vicinity of the flag pole was held in an area that accommodated us all and when day was done and the fun & inspiration had given way to that bone tired feeling it was short distance to the tents for a good night sleep only to repeat wake up call, skinny dip, breakfast, activities from baseball, basketball & soccer to swimming and swimming lessons (sort of), to horseback riding & tackling the ironwood at campcraft to camp games, skits, Duff's guidance and Sunday at chapel point. Does it sound like the basics of life at Kilcoo? Anyway, it felt like it to me and the transition in terms of what we were there to do from a staff perspective, make men, the same.

A sad note to finish. As I was inputting these thoughts it was announced that the Woodstock Y would be closing its' doors permanently effective September 1, 2025. They were out of money again and the new Y was now not so new any more. I was so fortunate to have had the benefit of Woodstock's YMCA (old Y, new Y, Fisher's Glen Camp) and then the Kilcoo experience (my crown jewel) and hope that the Woodstock connection contributed to the richness of the experience that is Kilcoo.

RICK COAD
1966

KILCOO'S 95TH YEAR ALUMNI REUNION - SEPTEMBER 2026

After a long four year wait, Kilcoo will be holding a special reunion to celebrate the end of its 95th year. Plans for this event are now being finalized and "applications" will be sent out at the beginning of March. Circle your calendars for the weekend of September 25-27, 2026.

For many past reunions we have been able to offset costs a little with sponsorships or price reductions facilitated by alumni using personal or business connections. If you might be able to offer something to help or you have suggestions for the weekend program please send me an e-mail at pchamp@sympatico.ca We would also appreciate it if anyone can offer prizes for the Friday afternoon golf tournament which Peter Oyler will be organizing for what must be the fifth reunion.



AMICI - A SUCCESSFUL 60TH SUMMER

The summer of 1966 saw Amici send its first child to camp - for 2 weeks. By contrast, this past summer Amici provided 352 children with a total of 740 weeks at 48 different Ontario camps. 82% of these children were return campers and among them were a number of indigenous children and children newly arrived in Canada.

With the inclusion of the Camp Awakening Legacy Fund, a good number of physically disabled children also benefitted from camp and 24 former campers were involved in camp leadership positions.

A long climb from that first summer, 1964, when the Kilcoo camp staff gave birth to Amici and its growth is certainly worth celebrating.

Amici Children's Camp Charity

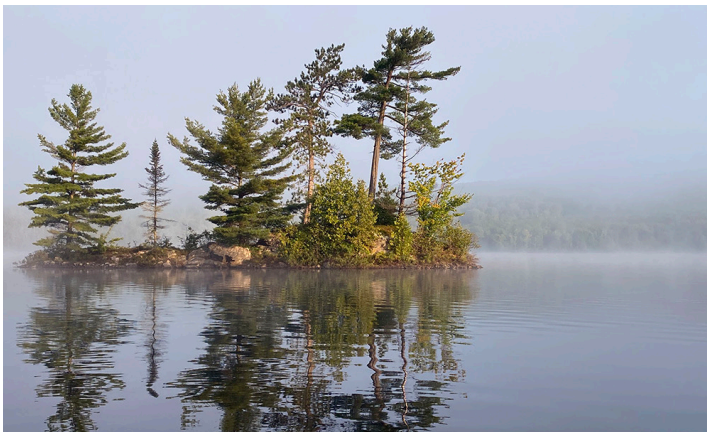
KILCOO IN ALGONQUIN PARK

The Gull Rock Gazette is always an interesting read, especially when contributors describe how Kilcoo (in my time, John Latimer) affected their lives. Like many, for me the camp experience was a significant factor in my career choice (education) as well as many of my hobbies (birding, canoeing, hiking, playing bridge) over the course of more than five decades since my last year at camp.

One of the lifelong interests I've pursued is experiencing Algonquin Provincial Park, an extraordinary patch of Ontario that is a geographical marker, an historical channel, a recreational magnet and a biodiversity gem. For me, that interest was primarily germinated through Kilcoo canoe trips.

Algonquin is one of Canada's most celebrated natural spaces, renowned for widely diverse ecosystems and scenic landscapes. Established in 1893, Algonquin is Ontario's oldest provincial park, covering 7,500 square kilometres of forests, fields, marshes, rivers, lakes, cliffs and rocky expanses. It is positioned in the transition zone between the boreal forest to the north and the deciduous forest to the south, resulting in an exceptional variety of flora and fauna. This biodiversity makes Algonquin a heaven for wildlife watchers, and particularly birdwatchers, with target species including moose, white-tailed deer, beaver, eastern wolves, black bears, pine martins and over 270 bird species. Every winter, birders flock (ha ha) from southern Ontario, the northern U.S., and Quebec to see four boreal species: Canada Jay, Spruce Grouse, Black-backed Woodpecker and Boreal Chickadee.





I preface the following paragraphs by emphasizing that my memory certainly has holes in it at this stage of life (not sure it was ever great but can't remember even that). However, my recollection is that my first trips to Algonquin were likely at the age of 6 or maybe 7. Those were family day trips, by car, to explore the highway 60 corridor. I still recall seeing people feeding bears at the side of the highway, something that you are very unlikely to witness these days. Although those were interesting trips, it was my first Kilcoo canoe trip into the park in (or about) 1959 that truly gave me the natural wilderness travel experience that makes Algonquin so special and what has attracted me to return literally hundreds of times.

I believe I was in cabin 7 when I learned that there was an opportunity to participate on a five- or six-day trip through the middle of Algonquin Park. I can't recall the leaders but believe it was a pool trip. However, I'll never forget the anticipation I felt. For days prior to departure, the group talked up how we were going into the wilds of Canada, a place where bears likely hid behind most bushes (don't run away and don't look them in the eye), where moose trotted freely down portage trails (you lads need to give way), and where we would be on our own for days at a time (DO NOT WANDER OFF). What, no camp cooks coming along?

The route was one that many Kilcooites, at least those of the day, would recognize, either travelling from east to west or west to east. Our choice was east to west, so picture this: put in at Opeongo; paddle north up and into the north arm; portage for a mile and a bit into Happy Isle (great first night campsite); portage 300 yards into Merchant; paddle for about two miles and then portage another mile and a bit into Big Trout Lake (home to a basketful of great campsites); slip down the Otterslides with associated portages (does it always rain there and where the heck are the otters?); drop into and then paddle through Burnt Island (wet campsite); finish the final portages for entry into Canoe Lake; and motor through that last paddle finishing at the Canoe Lake STORE, arriving as conquering heroes with filthy clothes and bold swaggers, and desperate to purchase one or two of those 15 cent chocolate bars.

On that very first portage I'll never forget slipping on wet rocks, falling and getting lodged in a crack, flat on my back like an old Blanding's turtle, and unable to get out of the very tight Woods #1 pack straps (yes, the axe pack). This was not an auspicious start, and I can recall looking up through tree branches and wondering if that tiny portion of blue sky would be my last glimpse at the free world. However, a trip leader ultimately found me, and with one hand pulled me out and I was on my way. To this day I think there was some luck in that, specifically the finding part, as for much of that portage I really had no idea if I was on the actual trail. The second night on, as I recall, and having set up camp on Big Trout, I can to this day see that western sunset (is there any other?), hear the waves lapping at the shore, and savour the feeling that I just may have had the best spaghetti dinner of my life. Otterslides and Burnt Island were where I learned about, and never forgot, the tragedy that comes from a wet sleeping bag. It never happened to me again.

Lessons from that first, "deep wilderness" Kilcoo adventure?

- If you don't know where you are, you'll rarely get to where you want to be (this lesson goes so far beyond learning to read a map and using a compass, eh?);
- If you can't start a fire, you (and everyone with you) are going to be miserable (without light there is only darkness – without heat there is only cold);
- Sometimes you need to ask for help and, if you never offer help, don't expect to have it offered to you;
- If you can't prepare a meal, or at least participate in preparing a meal, you are going to be the last to be fed and the first to be hungry;
- Don't let your sleeping arrangements (inside wall of the tent, sleeping bag, sleeping clothes) get wet, or you can expect to be miserable (a reminder for younger readers, in my day tents didn't come with floors … sad but true);
- The team cannot travel at the same pace as its strongest member – it simply can't happen, and, if the fastest canoe doesn't stop once in a while to regroup, it isn't a team;
- Reality never ever matches the plan;
- You're not always going to be happy, comfortable or safe (sorry about that last one, Chief);
- After a few days in the bush, Spam right out of the can will be surprisingly tasty, and you can change it up by frying slices of Spam and slamming those between slices of white bread that got soaked when the canoe upset and were then dried out on a rock when the sun finally came out;
- Save the Date and Nut Loaf for the last lunch (knock off less desirable stuff early);
- A beautiful sunset can change it all, and sunrise means you get to do it all again.

I did many canoe trips at Kilcoo but let me skip forward to one of my last as a camper (and apologize for the modest repetition in that I referenced this trip in a 2015 edition of the Gazette). I was spending August in Tent A (yes, you later campers, some of us slept in tents, though sadly I missed the years when there were female counsellors, a tradition that like a few others I sometimes think should have been maintained) when one of the leaders suggested an ambitious pool trip that would start at Canoe Lake, going as far north as Radiant Lake and the logging operation at Odenback.



The first push was up to Big Trout, into La Muir, Hogan and then Philip. Today's much improved maps show a fairly open Little Madawaska River running from Philip to Radiant, with one two-mile long portage. This was circa 1962, and we knew there was a long portage, but maybe, we thought, that might be a mile, but surely no more. Well, it turned out to be a dry summer (couldn't someone have called ahead?), and the Little Madawaska was dry as a bone; you couldn't float a boat. There was, however, a logging road, and that saved us. My recollection is that we portaged up that road close to 5 miles (some lucky guys got a lift on the back of a logging truck) and I learned that I didn't like hiking with a canoe and canoe pack nearly as much as hiking without a canoe and canoe pack.

Odenback, a logging operation where the Little Madawaska drops into Radiant Lake, was a life lesson. I met lumberjacks, I was treated to a lumberjack meal, I listened to (detailed) stories about men being crushed by logs and equipment, and I thought it might be a great idea to figure out how to make a living largely with my brain, small as it may be, because I was not and never would be the man these men were. They were strangers, they spoke a variety of languages, they smiled, they laughed, they swore, they spit, they didn't know danger, and they were gracious, curious, welcoming -- like people I had never met.

That night, with permission, we slept in a tiny one room shack beside the railroad track (about six feet from the track), and I remember waking up in the middle of the night, exhausted and very groggy, to the sound of a roar that was getting louder and louder. Sitting up and fully awake, suddenly it was as if the Lord said, "Let there be light" because that cabin was fully illuminated through a tiny, never-been-cleaned window pane, by a headlight. Then the light went out with a flash, and was immediately followed by a grinding, screaming holy heck of a noise and I swear that entire shack bounced up into the air and down again as that train came rumbling through. It took me about ten seconds to get back to sleep.

We left Odenback working our way down to Lavielle, Dickson and the longish portage into the northeast arm of Opeongo. I recall the trip leader saying to us at the top of Opeongo, late in the afternoon, "I think the Portage Store closes at 7." Over the following late afternoon hours we were an extraordinary team of paddlers showing off with deep, hard strokes, almost putting those boats up off the water, mile after mile. I've paddled with only a few hardened warriors the likes of which we were that afternoon flying down Opeongo, or at least that's how I remember it. We arrived at 6:40. The store closed at 9. I think the chocolate bars cost 20 cents apiece.

Chief created opportunities and one of those was the chance to learn about and from Algonquin Park. Since my time at Kilcoo I've hiked most of the major trails in Algonquin, spent winter nights in snow caves well away from highway 60, and flown low level in small aircraft for hundreds of hours over the Park. Every trip I see something different or differently, and I very often learn something new. Thanks for those days, Chief.

MIKE HATTON
1958-1971

THE SMOOTHIE GOLF TOURNAMENT RAISES THOUSANDS FOR AMICI

If you have never heard of this tournament, here's a bit of background:

Originally named the 70's Guys Invitational, it was renamed the "Smoothie' a year after Bob "Smoothie" Slingerland passed away. Bob was Assistant Camp Director and Voyageur Section Director during Chief's time. Bob inspired many campers and staff in the 1960 to1980s and passed away a few years ago. Recently we added a longest drive trophy shortly after Jeff Lloyd passed.

The tournament started with eight former staff members from the 1970s who just wanted to get together, whack a ball around, have a few beers and raise a bit of money for AMICI. There were no trophies, just a friendly game of golf. Time fades memories, but the earliest group was Jeff Lloyd, Jamie McCulloch, Paul Weale, Rob Galloway, Joe Bales, Bob Wood, Tim Stanley & Bob Dameron.

It has grown immeasurably over the past 20 years and ALL former Kilcoo staff members are welcome! This year's turnout was a new record and former staff members from the 1960's- 2010's attend. We now hand out trophies for the lowest team score (it's a scramble) and for the longest drive – see bottom picture.

We want to increase participation next year! We generally play in the second or third week of June at Westview Golf Club in Aurora – a lovely 27-hole track that is moderately challenging, inexpensive and not 'stupid hard'. Golfers just have to pay for their green fees/cart (less than $100.00) and donate $50 to AMICI.

In addition to raising some money for AMICI, what really makes the day special is not only the camaraderie of playing 18 holes with friends from your own camping days, but the chance to mingle with other former staff that are in some cases 80+ years old (and can still play a darn good game – see results below).

The low score and the Smoothie Invitational trophy was won by group #9, Ben Tigert, Drew Boright, Jacob Ellis, and Grant Elias, with a score of 7 under par. Congrats to the young fellas for an amazing showing. Interestingly, in second place was group #3, the oldy goldies, Peter Oyler, Dave Linton, John Carter, Bill Kiel, and Ross McNaughton. Congrats for a great showing guys. You still got it!

The longest drive, and Jeff Lloyd Memorial Trophy went to Jamie MacIntosh, plus a bottle of home-made maple syrup, courtesy of Bill Meeker (a past Tournament Convener).

And the closest to the pin went to Matt Simpson, no trophy, but he gets bragging rights and a bottle of home-made maple syrup.

Here is a list of who participated by foursome. Thanks to the following for supporting this year's event:

Tim Stanley, Bob Dameron, Paul Weale, John Lea

Todd Yates, Chris Hillyer, Mark Ross, Rich Goldman

Peter Oyler, Dave Linton, John Carter, Bill Kiel, Ross McNaughton

Dean Rutty, Rob Galloway, John Ryder, Joe Bales

Tom Yarmon, Ken Jones, Mike Walker, Dave Milne

David Kappele, Colin Ground, Murray McCutcheon, Jeff Setterington

Bill Meeker, Ray Lyons, Ian Campbell, Jamie MacIntosh

Griffin McKeown, Mitch Shearer, Tom Latimer, Chris Dinnick

Ben Tigert, Will Bellamy, Thomas Boland, Drew Boright

Wally Oakes, Scott Oakes, Matt Oakes, John Carruthers

Scott Elmhirst, John Grant, Rob Bosshard, Dave Spindler

Randy Kline, Rob McAdam, Bob Wood, Paul Hutton

A big "HOW HOW" to Randy Kline who again did a stellar job herding the cats, organizing logistics, and providing fabulous weather (yet again!)

Thanks again to Allan Leal, our Treasurer, who collected money; to Tim Bermingham as Official Tournament Photographer; and, to homemade maple syrup maker extraordinaire Bill Meeker.

We hope you enjoy the pictures and we encourage all alumni to try to join us next year!

If you want find out more, please contact the Tournament organizer Randy Kline at randy.kline@cogeco.ca. You are encouraged to organize your own foursome!

BOB DAMERON
1966-78



Ben Tigert, Grant Elias, Jacob Ellis, Andrew Boright with Randy



Randy Kline



Ross McNaughton, Peter Oyler, Bill Kiel, Dave Linton, John Carter



Jamie MacIntosh with Ken Jones

FROM JULY FLY-IN TO LIT: HOW I ACCIDENTALLY BECAME AN AUGUST GUY

Let me start by saying: I was a July camper. A proud, sunburnt, bug-bitten, slightly overconfident July camper. I thought July had it all: the perfect balance of warm weather, fresh staff energy, and a working fleet of sailboats and mountain bikes that hadn't yet suffered through a month of heavy use. When I became an LIT, though, I realized how much I had been missing through my July-only camp experience.

Kilcoo in August was an entirely different energy to me as a first year LIT. It was like July camp, but with a slightly surreal, end-of-the-world vibe. The docks are still there, the cabins still smell like wet towels and Penetrim, but something's clearly different. The air is thicker. The staff are more tanned. The campers are slightly more feral. And looming over everything is the Kilcoo Olympics — a multi-day fever dream of intense rivalry, athletic chaos, and face paint that I totally did not understand until my first August at camp. I quickly found out that July is essentially "Kilcoo Lite."

Don't get me wrong — July is amazing. But it's also structured, predictable, and relatively sane. You get your cabin, your section, your trip, your routine. You do your activities, you earn your badges, you maybe cry a little during The Rainbow Connection on the last night. It's camp, but it's camp with training wheels. Then August hits, and the wheels come off.

Becoming an LIT feels like being handed the keys to the camp kingdom — except the kingdom is on fire, your first job is to organize the Rec Hut costume cupboard, and actually there are no keys. As an LIT you're no longer a camper, but you're definitely not staff. You exist in a strange liminal space where you're expected to lead, inspire, and cover your cabin every night by 10:00 pm because the counsellor said so. The bonding experiences with other LITs are what really made it special for me: stewarding, half-days in Haliburton, Redstone (then tucked into Braeside Bay), and going into the woods with Peter Ruys de Perez to casually chainsaw down a few trees.

And in August, the LIT program goes even more full throttle. As a July camper, nothing prepares you for the Olympics, Kilcoo's answer to the Hunger Games. If July is a well-organized summer camp experience, August is a cult preparing for its annual ritual. The Kilcoo Olympics are the crown jewel of this madness. For several days, camp transforms into a battleground of epic proportions. Campers and staff are divided into nations. LITs become referees. Staff become generals, coaches, and occasionally rogue agents of chaos.

There are opening ceremonies that rival the actual Olympics (minus the budget and plus a lot of David Foster). There are chants, flags, face paint, and enough competitive spirit to make the fishing derby feel like a medieval siege. As an LIT, you're in the thick of it. You're organizing events and trying to keep the spirit alive while also preventing actual injuries. You quickly learn that you might be pushed off the sail docks by a staff member who doesn't like the call you made against their team in a Trailblazer waterpolo game. I once watched Chris Heagle swim from Long Island to Ruth's Island in about a minute and a half as part of the Captain's Race, which started with the entirely symbolic sprint between the five team captains from the field down a gravel road to the tower where they hand off to two canoe paddlers for the next leg of the race. Legendary.

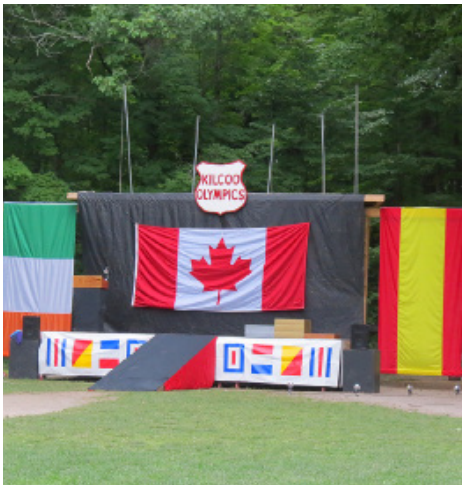
Beyond the Olympics, August has a vibe. It's looser, weirder, and somehow more intense. The staff are deep into their camp personas — some have adopted accents and slang to the point where they are barely speaking English, while others have stopped wearing shoes entirely. The campers are seasoned pros who weirdly seem to have the inside track on how the place runs and the best way to maximize pizza refills at lunch.

As an LIT, there's a sense of pride and camaraderie that comes from surviving the full summer. You've seen the camp in all its moods — the rainy days, the heat waves, the mystery meat chicken à la King dinners. You've bonded over the adventures and misadventures that make up a chapter of the Kilcoo story. You've become part of something bigger — not just a camper, but a keeper of camp lore. You've seen the Kilcoo Olympics from the inside.

Looking back, my transition from July-only camper to full-summer LIT was like stepping through a portal into a parallel universe. I thought I knew camp, but I didn't know August camp. I didn't know the joy of collapsing into bed after refereeing a full day of Olympic events capped off by the Parloff. I didn't know the pride of watching the chaos of the tire derby after spending three hours chalking out lines on the soccer field. And I didn't know how much I'd love it.

My advice to my younger, July-only self would be to enjoy the month. Cherish the structure. Relish the routine. But know this — August is waiting. And it's amazing.

BRAD MOYLE
1995-2010



The Olympic stage in all its beauty!


Present home on the island for LIT's

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF KILCOO CAMP

When reading the old novel Prester John by John Buchan, I came across the word braeside ("a steep slope") and my thoughts wandered to the old Braeside Lodge just south of Kilcoo Camp. Braeside was important for a time as it sold gas, and where it lay is part of the Gull River system that extends down to the Kawartha Lakes and Lake Simcoe where it meets the Trent water system that extends from Lake Ontario at Trenton to Georgian Bay.

As early as 1590, Jesuit priests travelling to Huronia (Wendake) told of Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) war parties searching for Huron tribesmen along the Trent water system. Explorers sought water routes to avoid the Great Lakes and possible confrontation with the invading Iroquois.

In 1615, the explorer and founder of Québec, Samuel de Champlain, used a map showing a route through Georgian Bay, Lake Simcoe, Balsam Lake and the Gull River to Ottawa. Other water routes were sought to avoid American soldiers and frontiersmen. The word Kilcoo is from the Irish Cill Chua, meaning "church of mourning." I only recently realized how steeped in history the names of my childhood were, for much of my childhood was spent at camp. The name Kilcoo Camp comes from the church and village where Patrick, patron saint of Ireland, was laid to rest on the way to burial.



Minden is the name of a battle in the Seven Years' War, and its Dominion Hotel, built in 1865, being one of the oldest in the country. That's what getting old does to a person: one gets a craving for history. John Latimer walked me one day to visit with Charles Plewman, his predecessor as camp director, who lived alone in a cabin north of Chapel Point. Mr. Plewman's eyes brightened to see "Chief," just as the eyes of Ruth on Ruth's Island (Easter Island) had brightened when I went with Chief to visit her at her cabin where she always seemed to be alone, and happily so.

John Latimer was exceedingly good to the older people in his life, and to my parents, with my mother and Peggy being close friends in Toronto and tennis partners at the B&R Racquet Club, and my politician father taking partial credit for Chief being awarded, most suitably, the auspicious title of Chief of Protocol in the Office of International Relations and Protocol within the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs. John Latimer's better connection was Premier Bill Davis, who was a close personal friend of his. Both married couples are gone now, but we honour them by remembering their place in our personal history.

At my mother's funeral I met Tim Currie, who went through camp at the same time I did, and from him, or from my brother Harry, I learned that Tim and other alumni have cottages on Gull Lake. Where I live now near the ocean south of Vancouver there is lots of beauty, but my father, who'd travelled the world, always said to me that there is nowhere more beautiful on earth than the rocky, lake-dotted areas of Haliburton and Muskoka and the rest of the rocky Canadian Shield.

JIM MCMURTRY
1968 – 1980

CALLING ALL ALUMNI - THIS MEANS YOU!

On Thursday, November 6th a group of alumni got together for dinner to welcome Don Wilson who was taking a break from his tireless efforts with a native rural community Dos Corrientes in Ecuador where he has spent the last 6 years helping the young people develop the skills necessary to sustain their community in an environment surrounded by violence and enduring scarce resources.

The challenge is now out to all alumni. I know many of you collect together in groups with your Kilcoo friends to retell old camp stories while extending valuable friendships that have become life long.

The next time you meet please have someone take some pictures and send along a report on your event. I would be happy to place it in the Gazette and with the wizardry of our publisher, Mike Adamson, I am sure it would provide interesting reading for many alumni.

These connections are so important. I am sure there are lots of them happening all over the globe. Whether hiking through the mountains, hanging at school or grabbing a walk or a meal at home, send them along!



