

Alumni Newsletter

WHY WE CARE

Our John Island Alumni have 2 purposes in staying in touch and keeping organized. First, it provides an opportunity for us all to maintain a relationship with our camp and our friends from years past. Second, it provides us an opportunity to ensure that the experiences we had as campers and staff remain an important factor in the lives of present and future campers and staff.

We have heard many times this past year from our staff that John Island is one constant in their lives while everything else they are exposed to is changing and variable—even their families and communities. Current staff tend to feel this more than staff from previous decades. Things are just moving faster and faster in our lives now than ever before.

We asked a few of our future staff (and thus future alumni) to express themselves on the impact John Island and the leadership training programs in particular are having on them. We think you will find what they have to say very interesting. It makes it very clear that the support the alumni have given in our campaign to renew the John Island facilities is paying off in leaps and bounds. You will find their essays on pages 3, 5, and 6

SUDBURY YMCA 75 THIS YEAR

A not well known fact about the YMCA in Sudbury is that there was actually a YMCA resident camp operated by the YMCA in Sudbury before there was a Sudbury YMCA. Back in 1935, Bill Brown who was a YMCA secretary from Southern Ontario, brought a group of boys to the Sudbury area and ran a resident camp.

From this early exposure to the YMCA and the eventual setting up of a YMCA in Sudbury in 1936, the YMCA has continued to grow, develop and change with the needs of the community over its 75 years.



Today the Sudbury YMCA not only operates John Island Camp and Camp Falcona, but the YMCA Employment Service, the Sudbury Newcomers Service, 10 Day Care Centres and is a partner with the Khartoum YMCA in Sudan where we assist in the operation of 2 schools, a choir and several sports teams (basketball and volley ball).

For more information, visit the YMCA website at www.sudbury.ymca.ca

NEW DOCKS AT WALKHOUSE



If you visited John Island this summer you may have noticed a new addition to Walkhouse Bay. Built by Serpent River, the docks provide a safer swim area for the local children and a sturdier place for boats to dock. For those of us going back a decade or two or more, this is a major improvement and significant

bonus to the camp. Over the years, John Island and Serpent River have created a partnership that involves providing camperships, employing Serpent River youth, use of the road and use of the new docks. This Thanksgiving season, John Island is thankful for its generous neighbours and opportunities to move forward together.

Inside This Issue

- Leadership campers tell us their stories
- John Moiles great-grandson visits camp
- Provincial YMCA Survey Gives High Marks to JIC
- Campfire songs through the years
- Amatol—the silent builders
- John Island to go Solar
- More alumni updates
- And more

MOVING? Please let us know your new mailing address so we can keep the newsletters coming!

AMATOL—THE SILENT BUILDERS

A group of about 2 dozen professional men, once camp buddies at YMCA Camp Wabanaki, have been largely responsible for much of the upgrading work at John Island for the past 10 years. Every spring they have dedicated one weekend to helping the John Island Capital program by volunteering their carpentry skills, building knowledge, and ability to work together as a team by doing everything from the panelling of the insides of our new cabins AND the dining hall, completing the outsides of many of our new cabins, detailed work installing new windows, doors and skylights in cabins, and so much more. We are deeply indebted to this group of committed volunteers who have selflessly given of their time and their talents in helping make John Island Camp a much better facility.

The Amatol Volunteers at John Island



FROM JOHN ISLAND STAFF TO RESPECTED GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL - DAVE O'BRIEN RECALLS HIS JOHN ISLAND PAST

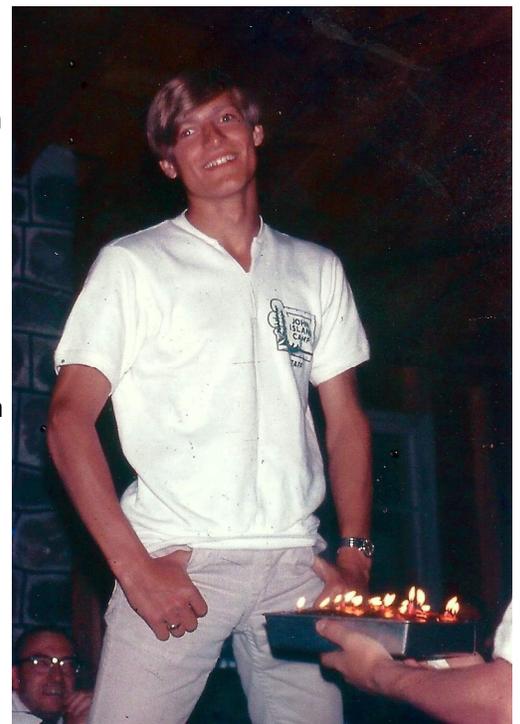


Dave O'Brien
today

I recently received an e-mail from Gary Gray with the attached picture. Needless to say, it brought back some wonderful memories of my years at John Island. My earliest memory is on my first day as a Counsellor in Cabin 3, Bill McCallum and I, along with a few others were in for early cleanup and Doug Bolton had just finished working on a new water line, which I promptly stepped on and broke as I introduced myself to him - not a good way to start a relationship with Doug (we became great friends). From then on I spent six summers at John Island and Y-Land and met hundreds of young campers as they worked their way through the Camp over many years. The most memorable thing about John Island is the friendships we all made and how long they have endured. I have never forgotten those great summers and still have a t-shirt from those days (it doesn't fit anymore as I am a little larger than my 17 year old photo). I remember how proud I was to get my first green John Island staff jacket!!!

I went on to the University of Windsor for 5 years and then came back to Sudbury to work for the City. I eventually became the City Manager for a few years and then moved to Ottawa and then Mississauga as City Manager of both cities. In 2004, I was seconded to the Province to become the Deputy Minister of Energy for 6 months after which I became the President & CEO of Toronto Hydro. I retired at the end of 2009 and became involved with a number of companies as a Director. I am very much enjoying retirement, the challenge of the Boards I am on and the ability to do the things that I have always wanted to do but never had the time. My two children, Erinn and Stephen are all grown up and doing well.

I have never forgotten the John Island years as they gave me many wonderful memories and some great friends that I still have to this day. It taught me some life skills that I have used throughout my career. I learned the importance of leadership and counselling which helped me assist young people as they moved into the work environment. I learned how to work with a team of great individuals who were always focused on delivering the best and I learned how nature is so important to all of us. They were the best years, with some of the best memories



Dave "O.B." O'Brien on his 17th birthday at
John Island Camp

THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME - Miles Robertson

River Norquay Camper, 2011

John Island has always been my second home. I've been coming here since I was 8 years old, and always wanted to be a River Norquay. This summer my dream came true, starting in early July when my River Norquay group embarked on our journey down the Missinaibi River. Thus began an experience that helped the 10 kids I was with, learn about themselves and life in general.

I loved paddling with everyone, hearing their stories and having conversations about whatever was on our mind. I became really good friends with everyone on my trip. We all came from different places with many backgrounds and we left together as a family. The group was inseparable, singing, paddling and cooking together. You learn much about a person when you share the same wet tent, and eat the food you prepare for each other. Our theme song "Party on the Missinaibi" captures the rich feelings we shared together. The friendships gained, will last a lifetime.

The canoe trip was a window to nature's beauty. I saw the earth in its purest form. Away from the modern world, I got to see some of the most beautiful sites. Hills, waterfalls, trees, and rock gardens, crafted into real life murals. It is easy to understand why painters by experiencing nature in its raw form. My that capture sights and memories that put a

Every day of trip was memorable in each day, kept in my journal, is there to the day was the same, but unique things ent. So many things happened on trip that I the river, going through rapids, and pushing cally demanding. We would push ourselves Hells Gate, a 4-kilometer portage, was one work harder then I ever have in my life and campsite. The memoires will remain close to my heart, never forgetting the great times as a River Norquay.

"...the most important thing you learn in the River Norquay Program is that life is a gift..."

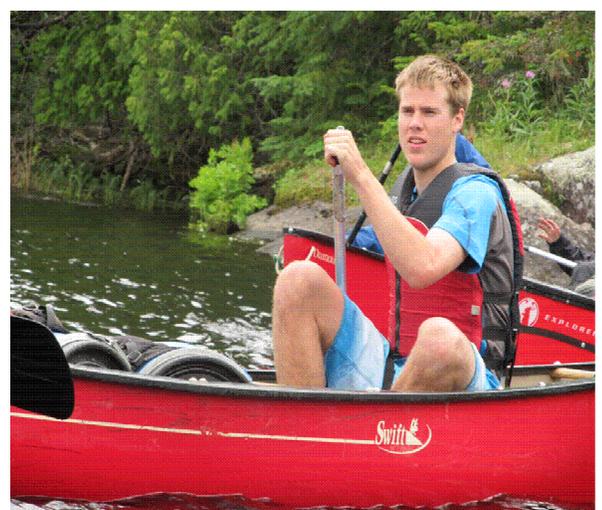
and photographers get their inspiration own camera is filled with photographs face on my personal perspective.

its own special way. The record of remind me how the general plan for happened making the days all differ-will never forget, like the calmness of myself to the limit. This trip was physi-to the limit every day. Overcoming of my best memories; because I had to endure the pain until we got to our

Being in the wilderness for 35 days provides a lot of time to think. When everything is taken away from you, you start to see what really matters. People often don't have time to just ponder their daily routine because they are to busy. 35 days of calm and still will motivate people to live their life to the fullest because the most important thing you learn in the River Norquay Program is that life is a gift. We are all blessed with the miracle of life. On trip you start to learn who you really are and what you really stand for. I came out of trip a better person, one of the biggest ambitions of my life fulfilled, knowing how to live the fullest of every day of the year. I couldn't have asked for a better summer!



Norquay River 'A' Group - Miles Robertson is in the back row, 4th from the left.



Miles Robertson

GOING SOLAR AT JOHN ISLAND - Pete Kerigan

Over the past 6 years at John Island, new buildings and facilities have been rebuilt and renovated through the "Share The Treasure" Capital Campaign. In respect to these upgrades, our biggest feedback has been "Great new cabins, but where are the lights?". With a little help from the sun and wind (and a few thoughtful people), this will soon change during the Spring of 2012.

Over the course of the last 3 years, and initiated by John Schmitt (CEO, YMCA Sudbury 2001-2010), John Island camp has been in contact with the Northern Ontario Heritage Foundation Corporation (NOHFC) in regards to grant funding. In 2011, we officially received word that under the Renewable Energy plan with NOHFC, John Island would receive \$45,000 towards our efforts to implement Solar Power. The only hitch... we had to come up with a matching \$45,000 in order to receive the NOHFC grant funding.

During the summer of 2011, Robin Thompson (Current Board Member, YMCA Sudbury) initiated contact and successfully received \$45,000 from the F. Jean MacLeod Trust of Sudbury, responding to interest shown from an article in the last Alumni Newsletter. This was an extremely generous and thoughtful donation that would complete our funding needs for the Solar Project. With this donation, we were able to successfully match that of the NOHFC, allowing us to move forward with final design consultations.

We are excited to be working with Northern Home Energy over the next few months in the planning and eventual implementation of the Solar construction at John Island Camp. May 2012 will be a very busy month at John Island Camp, and it will be nice to put some of the final touches on the Capital Campaign.

If you are keen to see this progress in the spring, come out and join us for our Annual Spring Work Weekend, May 11th to 13th, 2012!



BIRDS OF JOHN ISLAND - OVER 200 TYPES REPORTED



A John Island Downey Woodpecker

FROM LOONS TO SPOTTED SANDPIPERS, SANDHILL CRANES TO TREE SWALLOWS . . .

We have heard the cry of the loon and the sounds of the sandhill cranes early in the morning. The plaintive whistle of the tree swallow and the warnings of the crows in the afternoon. The owls and whip-poor-wills have kept us entertained in the evenings. However, unseen and unheard to many of us are over 200 species of birds in the North Shore area, including John Island. In a booklet entitled "Get Moving along the North Channel", Terry Carr and Erwin Meissner compiled a list of over 200 birds found in our camp area.

We don't have enough room to print the whole list in this newsletter, but we have put it in the John Island Camp website and you can check it out there. You can find it under "Birds of John Island".



A bird in the hand is worth 2 in the bush

SPRING WORK WEEKEND

Set the weekend of May 11th to 13th aside for the annual spring work weekend at John Island. There are a number of tasks for all members of the family during the weekend from painting to clearing brush from the winter to cabin repairs and helping get set up for spring programs. If you are interested, contact Pete Kerigan at pete.kerigan@sudbury.ymca.ca

I WAS ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS

- Haley D'Angelo - Program Norquay 2011

“During my training I had a lot of time to reflect on myself and to think about the kind of person that I would like to be.”



Haley D'Angelo

In the summer of 2011, I had the time of my life! I was one of nine participants in the YMCA Program Norquay. When my team leader Aiya contacted me she told me it would be an experience that I would never forget. The leadership program certainly delivered. Well in the Norquay program I learned that I have the power and ability to do anything with friends and good leaders by my side. The words “can’t” and “no” weren’t in my vocabulary this summer. When I used the skills that I was taught and showed initiative I was able to accomplish great things.

I equally enjoyed out tripping and cabin placement. During our out trips I bonded with other members of my group, improved upon my canoeing skills and enjoyed the scenery and nature. During my cabin placements at John Island and Camp Falcona I worked with a variety of children. I felt really good about influencing their camp experience and helping them to build a love for camp and the great outdoors. I am very proud of the leadership skills that I developed while working with the kids and participating in outdoor activities. I will never forget portaging through the treacherous 1k mountain trail and the feeling of accomplishment when we got to the

other side. During my training I had a lot of time to reflect on myself and to think about the kind of person that I would like to be. Camp is a great place to try new activities such as; sailing, arts & crafts, windsurfing and kayaking.

The YMCA experience gave me the opportunity to meet some great friends and to learn about different parts of the world through international staff. I’ve heard some people call John Island “the Island beneath the sun”, where friendships never end and you never stop learning. I developed amazing canoeing, sailing and problem solving skills as well as learnt how to deal with campers. This program has prepared me to become a leader and I hope that someday I’ll be able to influence and share the camping experience with others.



Program Norquays receive training at both Camp Falcona and John Island Camp.

MEET THE NEW DIRECTOR OF CAMPING SERVICES, PETE KERIGAN

After 3 years as director of John Island Camp, Pete Kerigan has accepted the position of Director of Camping Services for the Sudbury YMCA, a position which puts him responsible for both John Island Camp and Camp Falcona.

Prior to joining the staff of the Sudbury YMCA, Pete was senior staff member at Camp Wanakita of the Hamilton YMCA . He is originally from Dundas, Ontario where he grew up and graduated from Carleton University in Ottawa.

Pete has a vision for camping in the Sudbury YMCA and based on the success he has had as Director of John Island for the past three years, we are excited to be part of the unfolding of the camping program in the near future.

Pete is always looking for feedback and comments and can be contacted by e-mail at pete.kerigan@sudbury.ymca.ca or drop in and say hi at his office at the Sudbury YMCA during the winter months.



THEY THOUGHT I WAS CRAZY

- Amelia Crichton (River Norquay, 2011)

Every year around January I have always been excited to sign up for John Island. This year at the beginning of the month I was a little ambivalent, but one of my friends convinced me to do the 2011 River Norquay trip. Now that I look back in the summer I don't remember why I was so nervous. My cousins Carly and Krissy Gasparini did this trip a few years back and they loved it. I remember hearing stories from their trip and I was anxious to make new memories for myself. When I told my friends that I was going into the wilderness for 35 days they thought I was crazy. However, they also thought I was brave because they knew that I would overcome my challenges and experience of the that not many people so grateful that I was able to attend the River Norquay program but she did the Program Norquays and had a blast there. I was on the trip that left first and it was rather stressful because we only had 5 days to get ready. In that time there wasn't a lot of time to get to know everyone but after a few days on the river we had all started to become friends. As the weeks went on in the river everyone became stronger both mentally and physically. By the time the 4km portage came everyone was ready for it. As we were getting closer to our end point in Moosonee I really started to appreciate all of the nature and all of the fun times that I had had. On the train ride back and the bus ride everyone was starting to realize that trip was over and that we were going back into the 'real world'. When we got back on the island everyone wanted to know about trip and all the stories. As the week continued everyone started to realize that his or her summer at John Island was almost over. On the last day of camp many tears were shed. Knowing that you were leaving your newly best friends was hard for all. The envelopes have already been purchased to start writing to my friends and I am very excited to see them in the near future. John Island has been my summer home for almost 11 years now and I can't wait to hopefully be back next summer.

"I.....have taken an entirely different look on life."



Amelia Crichton



JOHN MOILES GREAT GRANDSON VISITS JOHN ISLAND

It was an exciting day when John Moiles great grandson visited John Island this past summer. As with most of the Moiles family, very few of the descendents of John Moiles or his family have ever been to the island. The lumber that graced John Island from 1885 to 1917 was brought to the island by John and Bart Moiles, their brothers and close to 100 hired hands from Detour Michigan. The mill had defaulted on its payment to the mortgage company and rather than have it repossessed, they decided to "steal" it and bring it to John Island.

Don Moiles was impressed with the amount of history maintained at the camp from the lumber mill days and surprised that the sawdust burner and parts of the mill's foundation were still standing. Don was also able to tell us that one thing he had discovered was the mortgage company from Boston came up to the North Shore area soon after they discovered the mill was gone and they bought all the logging rights in the area so the mill could not legally bring in any logs to mill. The bankrupt mill burned down in 1917 and the area was vacated.

Don told us that John Moiles and his brother Bart were considered to the black sheep of the Moiles family and until now had been ignored by the rest of the family.

FIRE'S BURNING, FIRE'S BURNING...

by Steph Grenko

Gathered around the fire, faces flickering in and out of the night, with hands joined and the final notes of taps hanging in the air, we smile. Camp has begun.

Traditionally a gathering place for the whole camp, campfires have served many important functions. In the symbolic light and warmth, our wishes for the summer and our melting marshmallows are offered up. It is a venue for storytelling and ceremony, the birthplace of camp magic. Campfires often mark significant occasions, like the beginning and end of camp. The first campfire is always a welcome, an invitation to belong. At first the songs are unfamiliar and you might not be comfortable waving your arms and repeating 'go bananas' in slow motion with a group of strangers, but soon it has become second nature. You can sing and shout in unison with everyone else, you know when to clap and you know when to stomp. You're in! The end of camp often brings about a more solemn campfire and a few tears as you realize this is goodbye for now. But fear not, learning those songs wasn't a waste. You'll meet someone down the road who has also been to camp, and you'll start the do-you-know-this-song game. As the generations of campers change, so do the songs. Below we've collected a few favourites sent in from alumni, and don't be surprised if you find yourself humming them later today!



Campfires—always a favourite

From the 50's and 60's:

Happy Wanderer
Waltzing Matilda
I've Got Sixpence
Green Grow the Rushes Ho
Gunderbeck
Clementine
I've Got That Joy, Joy, Joy
Titanic
John Jacob Jingle Heimer Smith
Kum-ba-ya
He's Got the Whole World
Flee, Fie, Foe, Vista!...)

From the 70's and 80's:

Leavin' On Ole Ironsides
Titanic
Pass the Other Udder
Hello, My Name is Joe
One Tin Soldier
Barges
Where Have All the Flowers Gone
Black Socks
Old Hiram's Goat
Way Down the Road
Sam the Lavatory Man
Show Me the Way to Go Home
Mandy (Was a Bahaman Girl)
Flee (a la Trevor Robertson and "Flee,

From 2011:

Bazooka Bubblegum Song
Boogaloo
Shark Song
Sons of the Sea
Peace Like a River
Ain't No Flies on Us
Brown Squirrel
Pirate Song (Irish Sea)
Pony Song
Alouetteski
Banana Song
Pete Kerigan's Meg Song

STAFF CONTRIBUTE THROUGH AUCTION

Once again John Island staff showed their dedication to camping by generously donating and purchasing items at the 2nd Annual Strong Kids Auction held during staff training week. James Swan, Norquay leader by day, auctioneer by night, kept the crowd excited while selling items like signs from old cabins, retro JIC shirts, the classic Dining Hall print, a one-on-one Zumba class and even a summer birthday complete with a skip around the Dining Hall and cake for those of us who have are born during the other 10 months of the year. Among the auction items were Pete Kerigan's famous camouflage shorts, selling for \$60 to the River Norquay leaders who had planned to bring them on the Missinabi River to use for a different purpose each day. Although the shorts disappeared on Day 6, it is reported that they left with the greatest satisfaction of having been part of such a noble cause. In total the staff team raised just over \$4 000 for the YMCA's Strong Kids Campaign that will provide financial assistance for children to participate in YMCA programs like summer camp.



Celebrating success - the 2011 Staff

- Steph Grenko

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? JOHN ISLAND ALUMNI KEEP IN TOUCH



Rick Lee - Rick calls Prague in the Czech Republic home now where he is the owner and General Manager of Prague Adventures. Rick was on staff at John Island from 1992 to 1995 in positions of Support Supervisor and Norquay River Trip Leader. Rick also led a Superior Sea Kayaking trip and river canoe trips for John Island during his years on staff.

With his Prague Adventures, he runs events and team building training for companies as well as school camp programs. Rick's son Michael is now 2 ½ years old and is being trained as a future JIC staffer.

Jennifer Holub, 2001 JIC counsellor, has been teaching Kindergarten on Birch Island for the past three years and resides in Little Current. When she is not creating learning opportunities for the young minds of tomorrow, she is a Masters of Education student on the side focusing on Special Education of First Nations students. Jennifer released a folk music album in the summer of 2010 entitled "Names" and has performed around Ontario. She spends her summers guiding canoe trips for Wild Women Expeditions in the Temagami and Killarney area as well as mountain biking and perfecting her curried yam recipe.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We all know that camp friendships last a lifetime. However, time can separate us and send us to unknown addresses and even distant countries.

Send us an e-mail about yourself—where you live and what you are doing and whatever else you would like to share with those who you may have lost touch with. We have an active mailing list of over 750 alumni and hundreds more check us out on the John Island website. You can contact us at: gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca

PROVINCIAL YMCA SURVEY GIVE HIGH MARKS TO JIC

Every year Ideospace Research conducts a major parent and camper survey of YMCA camps in Ontario (and a few in other parts of Canada) and this year JIC received very high results!

The survey is conducted electronically on the internet with responses sent directly to Ideospace Research Assoc. to be collated and presented in a meaningful format to the camps.

Amongst some of the many highlights of the survey, 99% of the respondents said they would recommend John Island to a friend; 100% said they received good counselor support and the overall satisfaction rating on a scale of 1 to 10 was 9.3

An interesting sidelight is that the survey reported for John Island 84% received camp information on the internet and 43% from the camp brochure. 54% related to the John Island site on Facebook and 9% of those attending this past summer found out about John Island Camp by doing an internet search.



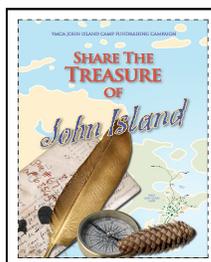
At a surprise birthday celebration at camp for Gary Gray's 70th birthday this past August, a cheque was presented by BrokerLink Insurance to initiate a bursary fund in Gary's name for the YMCA school in Khartoum, Sudan. The fund will allow the school to continue to provide a much needed education for youth in Khartoum. Anyone wishing to contribute to the bursary fund can do so by contacting Nancy Dube, General Manager of the Sudbury YMCA (nancy.dube@sudbury.ymca.ca). Pictured above are Brian Coufal of Canada Brokerlink/Frank Cowan Insurance, Gary, Gary's dog Rocky and camper Brady Coufal

SPECIAL THANKS...to Steph Grenko (Asst. Camp Director 2010) in assisting with the writing of this newsletter!

YMCA SUDBURY CAMPING SERVICES

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For past newsletters - visit the Alumni section of the John Island website.



For information on the John Island building renewal campaign go to:
<http://www.johnisland.ymca.ca/images/zbuilding%20progress%20-%20fall%202010%20for%20website.pdf>
To donate to the John Island renewal campaign - contact Gary Gray at gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca

