

# Alumni Newsletter

## MY FIRST SONG

By Suzy Wilde (Camper 2001 & 2002, Staff 2003 — 2005)

My experience at John Island is one that I will treasure forever, and one that I am thankful for to this day.

As a camper, I always expressed a love for music. My favourite time of day was campfire, and I remember spending hours working up different songs to perform with my cabin-mates. There were lots of other musical people at camp too, especially among the staff. When I was 16, I fell in love with Conor Hancey, an 18 year old counsellor who would sing and play guitar at every campfire. Of course, he didn't know I existed, but I thought he had the most beautiful voice in the world. I was an in-camp Norquay at the time, led by Laryssa Henry and Alex Thompson. One day, I was fooling around with the guitar and I started coming up with a little song: "Island of sanctuary, island beneath the sun, island of busy people, island for everyone..." I played what I'd written for Alex and she loved it. She told me that I should finish it and that maybe I could play it at campfire.

The next day, Alex told me that she'd arranged for me to meet with another person who played guitar, so that I'd have some company while performing my song. I noticed the traces of a smile on her face when she said "I think you know him, his name is Conor".

I couldn't believe she'd asked him to play MY SONG with ME! I

thought he'd laugh when he heard my clumsy strumming and my shaky voice. But Alex insisted. So the next day, Conor and I met on the office porch. It was a beautiful day and we sat in the sun with a lyric sheet Alex had typed up on the computer. It was absolutely thrilling. After we played it once through, he said, to my surprise, "Great song, Suzy!". I couldn't believe he liked it (let alone remembered my name).

That night, we played my song in front of everyone at camp. The feeling it gave me was indescribable, especially afterwards when I had staff and campers approach me to tell me how much they'd liked it. People started requesting my song at every campfire, and it came to be known as "The John Island Song". Whenever I returned to camp in the years that followed, people would ask me to play it again.

It was at John Island that I wrote my first song. The experience encouraged me to start writing more of my own songs. And now, I can't stop! Music has become my life and my career, and I have my friends at John Island to thank for supporting me all the way.

### John Island Song – by Suzy Wilde

*Verse 1*  
Island of sanctuary  
Under the bright pink sun  
Island of busy people  
Island for everyone

*Bridge*  
Don't wanna leave now  
Really can't believe how  
Time can move so fast  
With your friends at your side  
And your eyes open wide  
How I wish this day could last forever



Suzy (seated on the bunk) and her "Eagle" cabin in 2005.

*Verse 2*  
Island of understanding  
Where I have found my place  
Island away from my home  
Everyone knows my face

### Repeat Bridge

*Chorus*  
Cause the whispering shores  
Tell my ears I belong at John Island  
And when I'm home every night  
And I'm sleeping I dream of  
John Island  
John Island

### Repeat Verse 1 and Bridge and Chorus

*Toronto singer/songwriter Suzy Wilde is currently attending Humber College, studying contemporary music. She can often be found playing with her band, Stonefox ([www.stonefoxden.com](http://www.stonefoxden.com)). Her song "Flashlight Radio" is another John Island inspired song which she performs regularly and can be heard as part of a new project ([www.myspace.com/suzywildemusic](http://www.myspace.com/suzywildemusic)) with bassist Ben Whiteley.*



# SUMMER CAMP IN THE INSTANT AGE

## CAMP REMAINS A SPECIAL AND UNIQUE PLACE

BY: RICK BLAKE ( JOHN ISLAND DIRECTOR 1992 & 1993)

In 1987 we had a fax machine installed at the island camp I directed at the time. The first fax we received was a message from a parent to a camper. I had thought about the convenience of instant communication for doing camp business but hadn't thought about its potential impact on the "awayness" of camp life. I decided on the ostrich strategy and phoned head office and suggested that we not give out the fax number to parents.

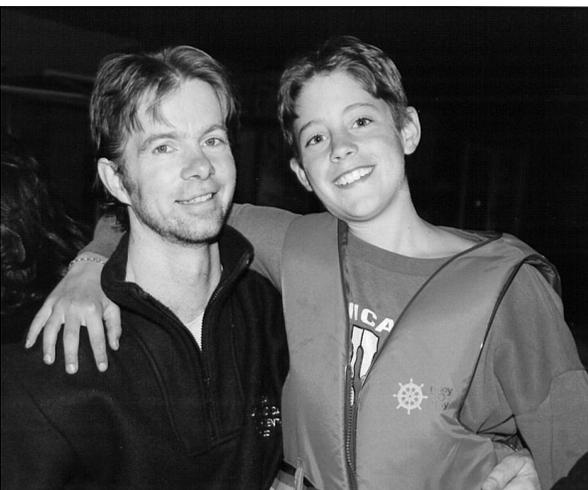
Twenty years later, the fax machine is ancient technology. The majority of the staff and kids who attend camp spend a lot of time in their lives plugged in with constant communication through instant messaging, Facebook, texting, cell phones and a myriad of other portals. I know how edgy I get when I can't access my e-mail. I can imagine that young people at camp must go through a dramatic withdrawal from the constant flow of instant communications, sounds and images and the immediate access to information.

How does this affect their camp experience? I quizzed a couple of 14 year olds about the contrast between their "regular lives" and summer camp. They both expressed delight to be able to take a break from their plugged-in lives. They like the simplicity of camp. They like the fact that they don't have to juggle a variety of responsibilities or complex schedules. They have time to focus on things that they are interested in, and they can let go of their school and home identity and be more comfortable in their own skins. They also talked about the first couple of days of camp of switching their brains over from the "instancy" of plugged in life to the "immediacy" of camp life.



**Rick Blake & Jim Shaver—1993**

It seems that the raison d'être of camp has changed little in over a hundred years; it's just that the contrast between "regular life" and camp life has sharpened in different ways. A good summer camp is an unusual construct. Teenagers and young adults, who live most of their lives immersed in popular culture, pass on ancient traditions and skills – storytelling, fire making, knot tying, the creation of bracelets and amulets and navigation by the stars. It is an experience that combines the mythic and heroic. There are rituals, rites of passage, journeys of discovery, feats of skill and strength. It is a society where the younger learn from watching the older, where bonds of friendship are forged through intense shared experience, where entertainment is created through wits and imagination. It is a place that encourages art and performance, and where ingenuity and creativity are applauded. This timeless experience still holds its power.



**Rick & Angelique Savoie—1993**

A recent analysis of research on the impact of summer camps showed that camps that provide opportunities for self-discovery and involve campers in the decision making about their experience have a significant, positive impact on the self-constructs of youth. This positive effect was found across campers between ages six and twenty years old. The other finding was that the camping experience is able to generate this effect over a relatively short period of time, ranging from one to eight weeks as opposed to several months or longer in most other situations. Instant, multi-layered communications and stimuli may be having a significant impact on our youth but it is evident that a good summer camp has the power to transcend the digital buzz and open the doors for life-changing experience.

*Jim Blake spent 25 years working in the camping field. He served on the boards of the BC Camping Association and the Ontario Camping Association. He was the Director of John Island Camp in 1992 and 1993 when Rick Wise went on sabbatical. Jim now hangs his hat in Haliburton where he works in community economic development.*

# VISITORS WELCOME

SUNDAY JUNE 22ND

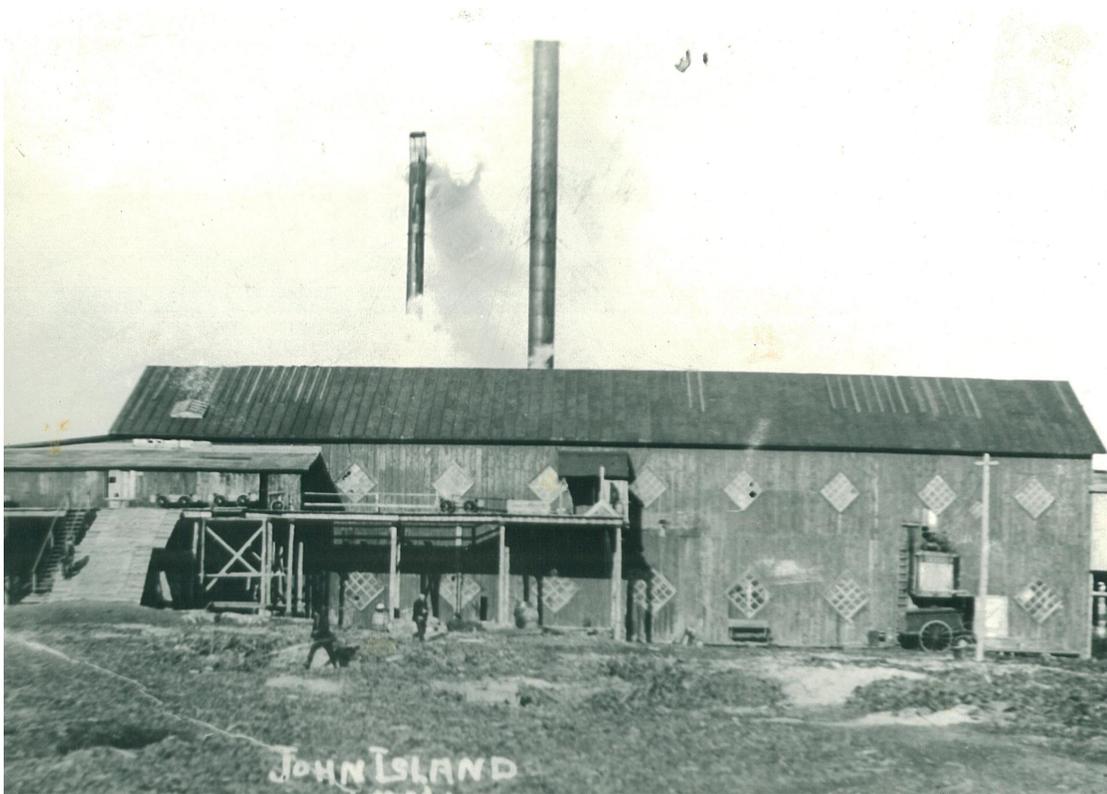
Camp boats will start transporting visitors from the Walkhouse Bay docks to the camp at 10:00 am on Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>. The annual visitors' day is expected to attract record numbers this year as parents and campers come to visit with staff at the camp. This year camp alumni and other donors are welcome to come to see the many improvements at John Island where so many of us have had our own lives shaped in years past.

Although there will be hot dogs and juice and a few other camp treats available, visitors are free to bring their own lunch and non-alcoholic beverages and enjoy a picnic lunch with their family and friends.

The last boats leave the camp by 3:00 pm to take visitors back to Walkhouse Bay. If you are interested in visiting the camp, just show up at the Walkhouse Bay dock – the boats are running continuously between 10:00 am and 3:00 pm. Bring along friends that may never have had a chance to see the camp.

**Directions to Walkhouse Bay Pickup Point - take Highway 17 to Cutler, turn south onto Weegwas Road, turn left at the first stop sign onto Village Road West, after the railway tracks turn right onto Walkhouse Bay Road, drive 6km to the end of the road. Please drive slowly as this is a residential area.**

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*The saw mill was erected on John Island in 1880 beside the present location of the low-water docks. The mill was built by the Moiles brothers (John, James, George, Bart) who "stole" the mill from DeTour, Michigan. The Moiles operated the mill until 1900 at which time they sold out to Guy Moulthrop of Bay City Michigan due to financial difficulties. Moulthrop ran the mill for the next 18 years until a fire destroyed it. The mill was one of the smaller of the twelve area saw mills. It employed between 40 and 60 men and ran by steam. Processed lumber went to American markets.*

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## WORK WEEKEND 2008 - MAY 9th to MAY 11th

EVERYONE WELCOME !

Paint will be mixed and ready! Saws will be sharpened, hammers readied, food prepared and transportation standing by for the crew heading out to John Island Camp for the 2008 Spring Work Party. Erika Lougheed, our JIC Director, is now putting together this spring's working group. As in past years, we expect camp alumni to respond to the need to get the buildings and grounds in shape for the busy camping season ahead. We can arrange for workers to travel to the island from Walkhouse Bay on Friday (from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm) or Saturday. We will end following lunch on Sunday.

If you are interested in joining us this year for a weekend of work and a lot of fun, contact Erika at [erika.lougheed@sudbury.ymca.ca](mailto:erika.lougheed@sudbury.ymca.ca). Bring warm clothes and your own sleeping bag and we'll make sure you get a comfortable camp bed and some good camp food.

# THE CONSTRUCTION DAYS

## MEMORIES OF A JOHN ISLAND BUILDER

By: Bruce Carscadden—John Island Founder

In September of 1950, I arrived in Sudbury to teach. One of the first persons I met was Lance McCluskie. Lance was a teacher, a little older than I was and more to the point, he was a member of the YMCA and a member of the Y's Men's Club. As one thing led to another, I was introduced to the Y, the Y's Men's Club, the town of Spanish, the Mitchell family, the "Kismet", AND John Island. I made several visits to John Island over the next few years as, along with many others, I helped to build the camp. I have only been back once since then, in 1977 to visit my son during his stay at the Island. But the memories of those weekends in the early 50's come back easily.

Some of these memories are more distinct than others. Some of the people I met were Lionel Burgess, Harry Meade, Al Bell, Glenn Stark, Gerry Smith, Joe Nichol, Fred Hackett, Grant Pilkey, Cec Woods, Jack Smith, Stan James, Gordon Jones, Herb Cavers, John Gray, Ray Barnard, and another chap, Harvey.?????. I must thank Lance for helping to gather these names out of the mist of the past. I'm sure there are others we should recall, but at the moment we can only apologize to those we missed. Lionel was the General Secretary of the Y, but I remember him as a great organizer of people and materials, including the food at John Island. I think that Harry did a lot of the designs, but my impression was, that although specific people had specific roles, the work progressed each weekend through cooperation and good will. What amazed me most was the planning that must have been done to bring the materials and the people together to accomplish what we did. It reminds me of the infinitesimal part I played in the process of making John Island Camp happen.

Along with these "professionals" were a number of worker bees, (I hesitate to use the term "drones"), a group of unattached young males who turned out for the thrill of the trip, the fun to be had, and a sense of being involved in something worth-while. I doubt if any of us were able to see what John Island would become. Among this group were Lance McCluskie, Joe Nichol, Doug Mulholland, Ed White, Jim Rutherford, Jim Anderson and I. There was another teacher from Sudbury High, but I can't come up with his name.

I'm amazed at how few details I can recall about the work on the Island. I remember that the Kismet delivered us, the food and the building materials at the east end of the Island and that everything had to be transported to the campground on the south shore. Fortunately, there was a tractor and a trailer or wagon to handle the heavy items. Previous work parties had built a number of the junior cabins so we had a



place to sleep and escape from the insects at night. These early builders slept in a house boat that was towed to the Island each trip. During my visits some of the senior camps were built, the dining hall took shape and a hospital was planned for the east end of the beach. I cannot recall any generators or back-hoes, so all the digging, chopping, and cutting must have been done by hand. Long hours and hard work resulted in hearty appetites and sound sleep, although some nights sleep came late, partly because of the mosquitoes, but also because of the repartee that bounced back and forth between the two wings of the cabin. Occasionally even today, something will bring to mind one of the stories or jokes, and it seems for a moment that I am right back there, laughing until it hurt. But I won't repeat any of them here.

It is said that when one travels to a new place, half the fun is getting there and back. It is of those trips on the Kismet



**Houseboat:** Used to haul building materials from Spanish to John Island — and used for sleeping before the cabins were built — early 1950's.

reason. It was soon dark, but by that time I knew that Ellwood would get us there. Suddenly, however, a dense fog rolled in. The line of the tree tops was no longer visible against the sky. We could see nothing. Everyone was silent, trying to stare through the fog. Ellwood had reduced speed. I was sure that he knew what direction we were going, but I could not understand how he could know how close we were to land or how far we had progressed. Suddenly he asked all of us to be absolutely silent, he shut down the motor and went out to the back deck. After a moment he came back in, started the motor and progressed slowly for a short while. Then he repeated the process several times. He knew the area so well that when he could hear our wake break on the shore of the island to our left, he knew how close he was to it. When he could not hear the splash on the shore, he knew that there was no shore there and we were between islands. He obviously knew how many islands and spaces there were between Spanish and our destination. He took us right between the piles of slabs on each side of the entrance to the dock at John Island. Then the fog lifted.

No, there was no radar, no radio, not even a GPS. I'm sure all of us admired Ellwood's skill, knowledge, determination and confidence in handling any situation. I know that I am still so impressed with his ability to handle that boat that I really hesitate to mention the afternoon when, on the way back to Spanish, we ran out of fuel and a few of us had to go by the "life boat" to Cutler to phone for help. That's right- no cell phone, no coast guard. However, it was a beautiful Sunday afternoon and it made just one more memory of the John Island chapter of my life.

John Island has always been a part of my life's memories. Once in a while something will remind me of it and I get a warm, if fleeting feeling. But, since talking to Gary Gray, and reading the November Newsletter, I realize what an impact it has made on so many people, and that makes me very happy to know that I had even a tiny part in making that happen.

I hope many more people will share their memories through the Newsletter. I wish The John Island Camp Capital Campaign every success in their work.

with Elwood as the skipper that I have the most vivid recollections. The departure from Spanish late in the evening, and the landing at the dock on my first trip were the beginning and end of an awesome trip. The expanse of water, the number of islands, the birds, the sound of the water and the changing light were breathtaking to one who has not experienced such a profusion of sights and sounds before. On subsequent trips I was able to pay attention to the boat and to talk with the rest of the passengers. I got to know a little more about this young kid who had been allowed to handle this big powerful boat for such a long trip all by himself. He may have been younger than I was (not by much), but in his world he was a master already. During the week he attended Espanola High School, and on the weekends, at least when the rivers and lakes were open, he had the most exciting job I could imagine. Ellwood knew he was going to be a dentist. Now, according to the November newsletter, he is RETIRED. Where did the years go?

On one trip we left Spanish later than usual for some



**The Old Milk Wagon**

*Ever resourceful, an old milk wagon pulled by a tractor was used to transport building materials during construction.*

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

**Our John Island Alumni are a very mobile group of people. Here is an update on a few of them.**

**Leslie Garber** - Staff Member 1997 & 1998 - I am living in Portugal Village, in Toronto. My husband and I bought a house and we spend a lot of time planning to fix it up. I am married to David Bezic - who I met at McMaster University. We got married in 2006, in London, Ontario. I am teaching Grade 1 and 2 French Immersion. I take a streetcar to work and walk home. I like yoga and painting classes. I have taken some classes at the Haliburton School of Art with Andie Burk. I really like to cook, but I especially like to eat out in restaurants. I just discovered oysters and now I like them even more than I like sushi. I like reading novels but lately I read Domino magazine almost exclusively. I miss John Island summers, the people and the beach.

**Bill McCallum** – 1962 – 1970 Camper, Counsellor (Cabin 3 & 7), CIT Director, Crafts Director, Junior Section Director, Program Director. I have been living in New Zealand since 1972 when I moved here to study forestry in Christchurch. I have been involved in the forest industry since graduating in 1976. Currently I am General Manager of Hancock Forest Management (NZ), a subsidiary of John Hancock which coincidentally is now owned by Manulife Financial out of Toronto. I am now living in Tauranga, New Zealand with my wife Prue, a GP, and 3 children – Alice who is currently studying in Sydney, Australia, and 2 boys Will and Jamie away at school in grades 13 and 10. Both Alice and Will have been campers at John Island for two summers. Currently my hobbies include fly fishing, skiing, tramping and gardening.



*From the left - JIC Staff Members - Mac Sinclair, Jack Smith, Jack Darraugh, Jim Sinclair, Brian Aistrop - 1958*



*Girls Camp Staff - circa 1958 - From left: Marie Hurtubese, unidentified, unidentified, Barb Fogle, unidentified. If you can identify anyone, let us know.*

**Dave O'Brien** (OB) – Mid 1960's - Dave is currently living in Toronto where he recently assumed the position of President and CEO of Toronto Hydro. Dave was recently highlighted in a story in the Toronto Star (Apr. 6<sup>th</sup>) for his work in that position.

## **Camp Directors Are Productive!**

Congratulations to current Camp Director **Erika Lougheed (Andersen)** who with her husband **Sean** gave birth in November to **River Lougheed**. River gets his first John Island experience this summer when he will be at the camp with his parents. **Colin Veevers** - JIC Director from 2001 to 2005 - and his wife **Tammy (Proden)** recently welcomed their daughter **Madison** to the family. Both Colin and Tammy live in Sudbury where they are teachers.

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## **WE WANT YOUR HELP!**

After every issue of the Alumni Newsletter, it is exciting to hear that old friends from camp have gotten in touch with one another.....thanks to reading about someone that they had long lost touch with. We want your help in letting others that you may not have seen or talked to since camp know where you are. It is simple and only takes a few minutes. Please send an e-mail to us at [gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca](mailto:gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca) with a bit of information about yourself, including when you were at John Island Camp and what you did when you were there. If you would like to write an article for the newsletter, just let us know and we will work it in. Currently our alumni newsletter mailing list exceeds 700 people so there is sure to be someone who would love to hear about YOU.

# CONSTRUCTION ON THE ISLAND CONTINUES

MAINTAINING THE "LOOK" AND "FEEL" OF JOHN ISLAND CAMP

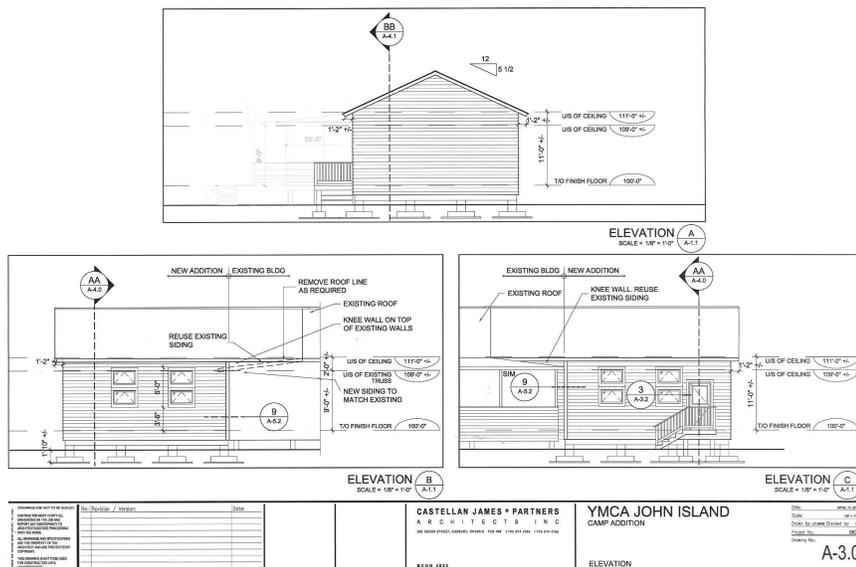
By: John Schmitt (YMCA Sudbury CEO)

Very recently, you received a mailing about the John Island Campaign to rebuild many of the structures on the island. We hope you will consider helping us with our goal, if you have not already done so. Over the next few years we will be renovating and rebuilding camper cabins and the Dining Hall. We have already begun replacement of the showers and the toilets. We are maintaining the "look" and "feel" of John Island while updating the facilities our campers enjoy.

This spring we will begin the renovation of the Dining Hall with the addition of a new kitchen. The new kitchen will be added to the existing Dining Hall increasing the square footage by 625 square feet. The old kitchen will become new eating space in a very crowded Dining Hall. The kitchen will receive new equipment and will be designed for maximum efficiency in meal preparation, meal serving and dishwashing. The old kitchen will be used this summer while the new kitchen is built. Cabin replacement will continue throughout the summer. Next fall and spring the interior of the Dining Hall will be renovated and updated. In 2009 the final new Rub-A-Dub will be completed with 4 new composting toilets. The architect's drawing of the new kitchen is shown below, and construction progress pictures have been included on the back page.

This year we will also be working on the "greening" of John Island Camp. We will be installing solar lighting in all the new camper cabins, and we have installed "on-demand" water heaters in the new showers. We are also investigating technologies such as wind power and larger water storage tanks to decrease the use of our diesel generator. It will be very strange to see a cabin light on after the generator has been shut off for the evening.

Many John Island alumni have supported our project. We also hope that alumni will visit the camp on June 22nd and that donors will plan on being with us on Sunday September 7th for the Dedication Day. It's an exciting time for John Island Camp.



## JOHN ISLAND QUIZ

### TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF JIC

As John Island Camp is about to start it's 55<sup>th</sup> year of camping, how familiar are you with the camp's past? Here are a few questions to test your knowledge.

1. In what year did the camp offer co-ed camping sessions?  
A: 1968 B: 1970 C: 1972 D: 1974 E: 1975
2. Of the persons listed, who was NOT a camp cook and John Island?  
A: Jean Wickstrom B: Ron Mahood C: Millie Facca D: Richard Skerl E: Ma Strain
3. Which of the following rivers has NOT been canoed as part of our Leadership Training Program (Norquays)?  
A: Rupert B: Attawapaskat C: Seal D: Winisk E: Albany
4. Which of the following has NOT been a program offered at John Island?  
A: Music Appreciation B: Dark Room Photography C: Cricket D: Swimming Classes E: Rocket Science
5. In what year was the Kismet pulled up on land by the bridge as its final resting place?  
A: 1969 B: 1971 C: 1972 D: 1973 E: 1974

# CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

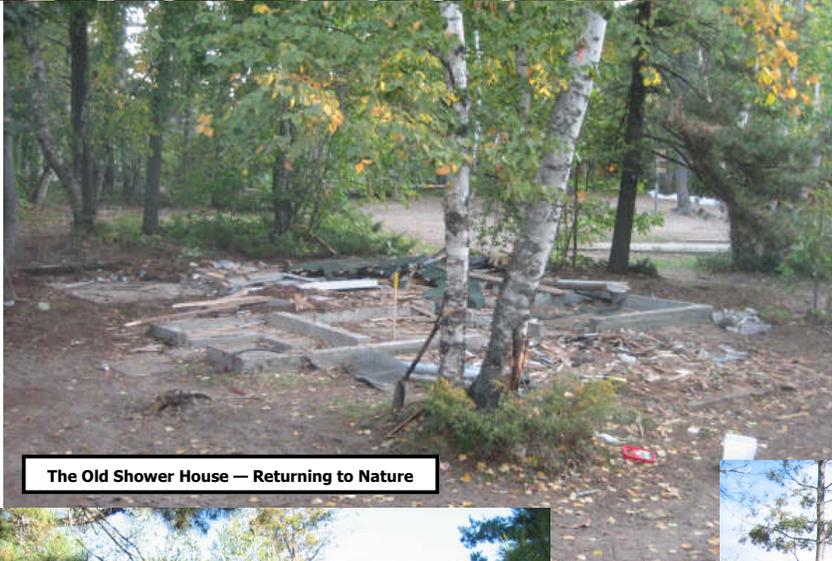
SEE ALL THE PROGRESS AT THE OPEN HOUSE ON JUNE 22ND



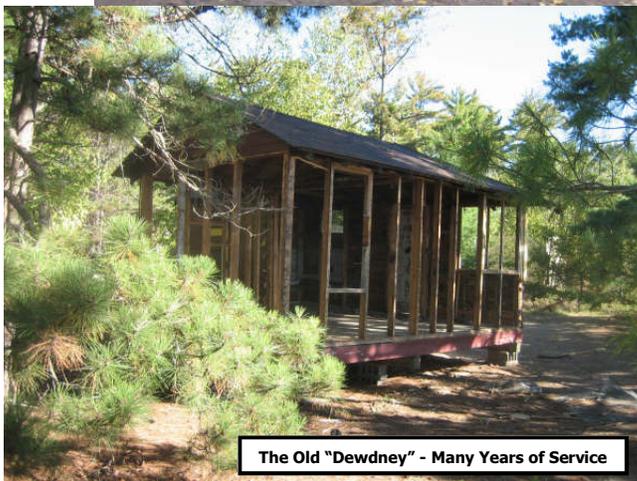
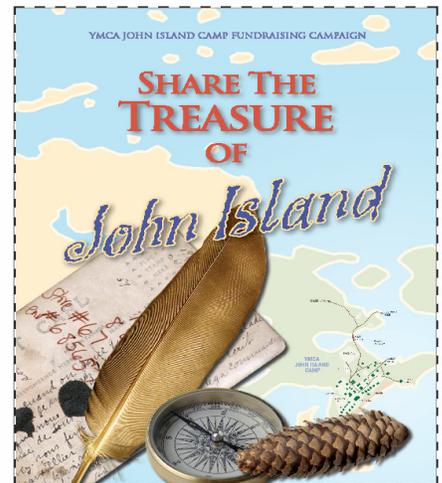
The View From The New "Gowan"



The New Showers — Clean & Private



The Old Shower House — Returning to Nature



The Old "Dewdney" - Many Years of Service



The New "Dewdney" Under Construction



## YMCA SUDBURY CAMPING SERVICES

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705-674-6171 (Camping Office)

800-465-9622 (Toll-Free)

705-675-8777 (Fax)

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

[www.sudbury.ymca.ca](http://www.sudbury.ymca.ca) [www.johnisland.ymca.ca](http://www.johnisland.ymca.ca)