



Alumni Newsletter

A Time for Renewal

John Island Camp has been a place of memories, friendships, learning, growing, and magic for more than 50 years. But, the structures that support these experiences are old, and in need of renewal.

What we do on John Island in the next 5 years will impact on the next 50 years of life-long memories for future generations of campers.

In the spring of 2006, we will begin fundraising for the renewal of the buildings and structures that support the spirit of John Island. Although we have been investing slowly in the camp for the past 10 years, (as outlined in a subsequent article in this

newsletter) it is time to challenge ourselves.

This spring we will launch an \$895,000 capital campaign to replace or renovate most structures and buildings on John Island over the next 5 years. Planning is underway to replace and renovate camper cabins, the Dining Hall, showers, toilets, and support buildings. Careful consideration is being given to the history and traditions of John Island Camp, while investing in the next 50 years of campers.

Over the next 5 years more than 1.1 million dollars will be invested at John Island Camp, but we will need your help.

We need John Island alumni to give generously to our capital campaign. We need volunteers to ask other alumni to invest in future memories at John Island, and we need people to give leadership to this exciting project of renewal.

If you feel you could help, please email Gary Gray



(ggray@sudbury.ymca.ca) and let him know how you would like to be involved.

Over the next few years you will hear from us often as we share the news of our great renewal. You may also hear from us as we ask you to give of your personal treasure to support our common treasure—John Island. You may also hear from us as we look for information about your fellow campers, staff members, and family members, as we continue to reunite the John Island family. We look forward to hearing from you as we **"Share The Treasure Of John Island"**.



FRIENDSHIPS MADE AT CAMP - A LASTING RELATIONSHIP MAKING FRIENDS AT JOHN ISLAND CAMP

I first attended John Island in 1989, with my cousin Alex, as a "Little Gal". To tell you the truth, beyond the names of my counsellors and a few other facts, I don't really remember that summer all too well. Unfortunately for me, Alex's only memory from that summer seems to be me singing the Dining Hall graces in the cabin clad only in my underwear. The fact that matters is that we must have liked camp enough to return, since we went back in the summer of 1990 for a full two weeks. That was the summer that I met my best friend. Little did I know that when I crossed over the threshold of Rainboth cabin (#9 for the old-timers) my life would be changed forever.

She seemed fairly unassuming at first, long wavy brown hair, a watermelon t-shirt, blue bandana and a slight southern twang. It turned out that our Dads knew each other, our birthdays were both in July and that we shared an equal love of singing campfire songs, almost to the point of annoyance. We instantly became bosom friends (think Anne and Diana without the excessive cheesiness) and avid pen-pals upon our departure from camp, as I lived in Sudbury and she lived in Texas. We reunited with gusto at camp in the summer of 1991 for another two weeks, this time in Tern (cabin #10). Unfortunately, her family did not make the trip up to Canada over the next few years and we were not again reunited until the summer of 1994 (Shickluna - #11). We had of course remained close pen-pals over these three years, but the transition from age 10 to 13 is never kind to anyone. Instead of worrying about beating up the boys in Dalrymple and the threat of having to eat raccoon eyes for breakfast, we were now concerned with bad hair and older boys (and by older, I mean 14). I had also in the period of her absence starting bringing some school friends to camp so we were now an imposing posse instead of just the original duo of Alex and I. However, we survived our pre-teen hell phase, and even enjoyed another summer as senior campers. By this point we had fully immersed ourselves in JIC culture and there was no question of returning for Greenways (July, '96) and Norquays (Albany River, '97). Note: Colin Veevers, the newly-retired champion camp director was our leader for both, but that's a whole different important friendship story for another time.

By the time the summer of 1998 came along



we arrived at camp as first year counsellors. We had admitted to being best friends by this point, even though we had never lived in the same country and the bulk of our friendship still depended on letters and the occasional phone call throughout the year. Staff was a magic word for us, and a whole new slew of friendships were made as we made the transition from camper to counsellor.

I have been a staff member at John Island for the past eight summers and have made an unimaginable group of friends, staff and campers alike. I cannot even begin to explain how important my camp friends have been throughout my life. I would love to write for you pages and pages of my histories with everyone... but, actually, history is probably the wrong word since all those near and dear to me are still very much of the present, and hopefully, the future.

Even though my best friend moved on and has not worked at camp in the last five years, we are no less of friends. We still have yet to both live in the same place for longer than a month or two. I am not going to write some big shtick about how important she is to me, because it would come off as incredibly cheesy. But I'll leave you with a line from one of our favourite old camp songs: "We first met on those island shores, I found a friend who I adore...AND WILL FOREVER MORE!!!!"

The John Island Camp archives have been graciously accepted by Laurentian University and now reside in the Demarais Library Archives. They are available for anyone to visit and look through the hundreds of photographs and other items catalogued there.

Many of the photos of years past do not have names to identify who is in the picture, and that is where we all come in. Pictured here is one of the photos of John Island staff from the late 1970's or early 1980's. We have a few of the names, but not all.

Please let us know if you can identify any of the persons in the photo and, even better, if you know how we might get in contact with any of them. You can e-mail us at ggray@sudbury.ymca.ca.



JOHN ISLAND STAFF HAS EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS WHAT A DIFFERENCE 40 YEARS MAKES

Back in the 50's and 60's, we could easily fit the entire John Island Staff on the hearthstone of the fireplace for a staff photo. In 2005 our staff number 65 with barely enough room on the dining hall steps for a photo. With 16 camper cabins (2 counsellors to a cabin), 10 leadership groups (2 counsellors for most), a kitchen and maintenance staff of 8, program supervisors, counselling support supervisors, and specialty program staff, the total of 65 adds up quickly. In 1966 the Boys Camp Staff totalled 26 for roughly 88 campers and 11 C.I.T.'s. In 1966, the total number of campers enrolled plus staff at one time would be roughly 115. In 2005, that number has swelled to roughly 250, brought about by the increased capacity of the camp, increased number of counsellors, and the number taking part in specialty tripping programs.

1966 Boy's Camp Staff

From Left:
 Back: Gary Gary, Dave Hudson, Don Waddell, Stewart Atle, Hamm Kleinhuis, Doug Bolton
 Middle: Jim Johnston, Rick Paulsen, John Harvey, Bill McCallum, Rick Milburn, Richard Burgess, Jim Lanzo
 Front: Doug McLean, Ken McAuley, Marie Hurtubise, John Linde, Dave O'Brien, Robin McKellar



CAMP ROMANCES

CAMP FRIENDSHIPS THAT HAVE RESULTED IN MARRIAGE



Elwood Mitchell at John Island in 1954

When YMCA John Island Camp became co-ed in 1972, so did the staff. But camp romances began long before the integration of boys camp and girls camp.

The first marriage involving John Island staff was Elwood and Vivi-Ann Mitchell who were both at camp 1954. Elwood was the maintenance staff and Vivi-Ann was the first camp nurse. Elwood recently retired as a dental surgeon in Ottawa.

Since 1954, we estimate that close to 100 marriages have resulted from John Island friendships. The latest John Island couple to get married were Colin Veevers and Tammy Prodan. Colin recently left John Island as Camp Director to start classes at Teachers' College at Nipissing University in North Bay.

Tammy is a teacher in Sudbury.

We would be interested in hearing of others who met at John Island and eventually joined together in marriage. Please send us an e-mail at

Tammy and Colin
October 2005



In 2004, it was the renovation of the old hospital on the hill into new guest accommodation facilities, renovation of the old cooks cabin into a completely renovated Director's Cabin, and installation of a new water treatment system. In 2005, it was the addition of four brand new composting toilet units and the purchase of a new 14 passenger boat. In the past decade, John Island has undergone many changes as it continues to keep pace with changing expectations and upgraded standards in camping. Some of the renovations and additions to the camp, in addition to the above, have included:

- ▽ an expansion of the dining hall, adding space for 6 more tables in the dining area and 60% more space for the kitchen and food storage areas. The look of the dining hall has remained the same from the outside.
- ▽ Rebuilding of the old Director's cabin into a new health centre complete with full width, screened front porch
- ▽ A brand new campfire circle with solid benches for a safe and enjoyable campfire experience
- ▽ Rebuilding of the staff accommodation building built in the late 1980's into two brand new camper cabins (Fox and Fisher) and Camp Office.
- ▽ Renovation of the two Leaders-in-Training buildings (by the chapel and campfire circle), converting each into duplexes
- ▽ Building of six tent platforms, providing staff with more private accommodation
- ▽ Two new 14 passenger boats to speed up the change-over process and improve the safety of crossing the channel.



While great strides have taken place over the past decade, the camp is now over 50 years old and the YMCA will continue to upgrade the facilities. (See article on front page.)

A PLACE TO GROW UP

GROWING UP AT JOHN ISLAND CAMP

by Erika Andersen (pictured in front at left, as a Greenway in 1995)

It was 1985 when my Dad (Joel) and MaryLyn decided to take my sister, Dana, brother Greg, and I to John Island's Family Camp. I remember my brother Greg, falling off the bunk in the middle of the night and that is about it.

I was told that I loved it on the island the minute I got there. Every morning started with Polar Bear Dip accompanied by my father (no one else was brave enough). Throughout the day, I would be irritated when meal times came because they interrupted my activities. The whole week I begged my Dad to let me return, 'by myself' the following year. I suppose he thought, after time passed, that I would forget this because I was much too young, in his opinion. Little did he know that at age 5 this was merely an early indication of my stubbornness: a trait that shone, brightly, nice and early in my life.

I begged ALL year to go back to camp and the following summer, I attended, alone. I came home reporting that I had had the best time ever and immediately began begging to go again the next year but for longer than 1 week. I was 6 and this is how it went for the rest of my life.



I have few memories of my first time on the island, but I cannot recall memories of my life without it. It often makes me wonder who I would be without these experiences. When I think of not having John Island in my life, I am left with this huge void in my head and heart. What in the world could I have filled all that space with? I can't think of anything as worthwhile and enduring to fill it with. It has woven itself through every fibre of my being and has directly affected nearly every decision that I have made in my life. It probably always will.

Currently, I work with the YMCA of London, Camp Queen Elizabeth and it is nothing short of fabulous, too. Like John Island, it is a very magical place filled with great people and located in the near North to boot! I have made camp my career, and I can't think of anything I would rather be doing.

The summer of 1985 formed my life. I met my dear friends, my love, and my future career path all on that island. I'm sure many people have similar stories to mine and, like me, don't really know how to explain, in a few short words such as these, how immensely important YMCA Sudbury and John Island Camp are to them. I feel grateful and very lucky to have something this constant and welcoming: where, on a cold winter morning, I can visit it ALL in my head or, pick up the phone and ask my Dad to tell me the story about the time that he took me to the island that I never wanted to leave.

The Next Chapter - Two months have passed since the previous article was written.

I was asked to review the article that I had wrote in December for the newsletter. I was in London at the time, at the YMCA. As I re-read the article, one piece of it stood out for me:

'It has woven itself through every fibre of my being and has directly affected nearly every decision that I have made in my life. It probably always will.'

Now I sit at a desk, surrounded by new people and past mentors, awaiting a new and exciting adventure as the **Director of YMCA John Island Camp**. Whoa! I look forward to spending this coming season with campers and staff - this was a daydream every camper had when they were younger...."if I were the Director, I would...". Now it is reality, and I couldn't be happier.



CRICKET, RIFLERY ANYONE?

Campers at John Island over the years have experienced many different sports from lacrosse to cricket to riflery. Appreciation for sports from other countries and Canada, started during John Island's first year of operation in 1954. Jack Jones (pictured at left in 1954), a native of England, was Sports Director during the camp's initial year, and had everyone excited about heading up to the field by the Craft Shop for a ripping game of cricket.



JIC ALUMNI TRAVELING THE WORLD

Early last fall, John Island Alumni Ryan Henderson and Brian O'Neill packed a few items and set out to experience the world by land and sea. They check in with us from Nicaragua.

There is a bit of travel wisdom out there attributed to one of those ancient Asian philosophers that claims "a good traveller has no fixed plans and is not fixed on arriving". Whether or not it's true, it's a style of traveling that both Brian and I have been practicing since our first out-trips as John Island campers. From day trips around Big John, to 40-day Norway expeditions, the real reward of those trips came from the adventure, and the mis-adventure of the journey itself.

I'm not sure when the idea to try to travel around the world without the benefit of air travel began. It may have been the salty looking yachts moored in Moiles Harbour that inspired us. It could have started under a star-filled night on the beach near swimming area or even as we daydreamed lazily along any one of the lakes or rivers we've paddled during our stint at John Island. What we are sure of, is that at some point in our John Island years, the idea became a dream and the dream became a goal and now the goal is becoming a reality.



PHOTO CAPTION: Brian O'Neill (centre) and Ryan Henderson (right) with travelling companion Willie Paul in Celaque National Park in Honduras.

We've been on the road for over five months now, and while we still have yet to make it off the North American continent, neither of us are too worried about the end result. We've seen and done many fabulous things, made great friends, met interesting people, and made it as far as Nicaragua (at the time of writing)...all of it over-land. We purposefully travel with no fixed plans and have only a vague notion that we won't return until we've gone all the way around. For as that old philosopher said, the journey is the important part, not the destination.

From bus crashes in Missouri and Dengue Fever in El Salvador to sting ray attacks in Mexico and a stolen passport in Honduras, it hasn't all been fun, yet we both agree that we wouldn't trade any of it for a smoother ride. For all misadventure is just adventure, if you have the right attitude.

Since early January, in Guatemala City, we've been making all our forward progress by bicycle and have seen four countries from the somewhat unique perspective of distance cyclists. By the time this goes to print, we may have traded our bikes for passage on an ocean going yacht to cross the Atlantic, or Pacific. Who knows? We might just keep on going into Colombia and the rest of South America. I'm sure we'll be as surprised as anybody where we end up.

* You can stay up to date on the progress of their trip at www.theroadislife.com

DO RECOGNIZE ANY OF THESE NAMES?

We have the names of several JIC Alumni, but we do not have up to date contact information for all of them. Several of these names came from the walls of cabins (whoever thought those writings on the wall would be so helpful). Each issue we will list the names of those who are "missing" and that we have not been able to track down. If you can help provide us with contact information, please let us know. Contact Gary Gray at ggray@sudbury.ymca.ca

John Rentoul
Kurtis Chisholm
Stacy Lafleche
Tim Miller

Dave Zielenlewski
Melanie Chalmers
Carlos Landolt
Jim Ransom

Geoff Anderson
Shane Doyle
Robert Lim
Julie Ross

Sean Blenkinsop
Lizette Goodine
Julie Mazzuchin Ross
Fred Ruemper

Erin Chisholm
Ann Johnson
Jill Dutrisac

"I wonder what Joe Smith is doing now?" "Remember Liz? I wonder if she ever became a rocket scientist as she wanted when she was at camp?" "Mike always said he was going to be Prime Minister some day. I wonder how far he got!" "Whatever happened to Mary?"

Keeping track of friends we knew at camp is not always easy. As time moves on, so do people. We would like to help link people up again, even if it is just in thought. We invite all alumni to return the following information to us by e-mail (ggray@sudbury.ymca.ca) or regular mail, so we can help keep our John Island Alumni connected.

Name

City (or location) where you live

The years you were at John Island Camp (ie: 1967-72)

What you are doing now (job, volunteering, etc)

A sentence or two about things you would like us to print about yourself

Your e-mail address (if you would like us to include it in the info we print)

That's it! So simple that you could actually do it right now to get it done. Thanks for your help.

Where Are They Today???

Fraser Mount (Camper: 1985 – 1988, Staff: 1989 – 1997)

"The summer of '97 ended and I hopped in a U-Haul and headed out to B.C. with only my season's earnings and a couple of friends. It's almost 10 years later and it feels like it could have been yesterday. By day I work at keeping a downtown Vancouver Insurance Call Centre running as smoothly as your average Theme Day or Water Regatta. I get to play with telephone systems, schedule our staff, hang out by the water cooler and put out logistical fires. By night, I manage my partner's graphic design and production company in the beautiful suburbs of Port Moody. If the plans work out, I hope to visit "back east" in the summer! Feel free to send me an e-mail if you would like to get back in touch. (curator@phrayzer.com)

Mary Waddell (Camper at Camp Y Land: 1956 – 1961, John Island CIT and Staff: 1964 – 1972, Family Camp: 1977 – 1988)

Mary is "now retired from a teaching career of 33 years". My first job after I retired was cooking for the Canadian National Junior Ski Team on the Haig Glacier out of Canmore. I would get in on a helicopter. "I have been heavily involved with cross-country ski coaching for the past 5 years with Laurentian University (and travelled to Colorado, Maine, Alberta and Italy as coach." Mary is currently in Whitehorse, Yukon working in cross country skiing for the winter. She was recently notified that she has the position of team leader for the Canadian University Nordic Ski Team for the World University Games in Italy in 2007. "I still canoe, hike and kayak with my John Island friends, Cathy Wainwright Finn and Judy Waddell Angeloff. I enjoy exploring Canada – Gros Morne, Tuktoyotuk, Nahanni, Kluane – wow!!"

Josie Ogden (Staff: 1995)

"Now I am the Director of YMCA Wainui Park and the Youth and Outdoors Dept. of the Christchurch YMCA in New Zealand. I have been in this role for 5 ½ years now. For 2 ½ years before this I was a police woman (!), but this turned out to not be for me due to the culture of the police force in general. Prior to joining the police and immediately after returning from John Island I returned to university, finished my law degree and was also working with young offenders in the Christchurch Prison, and post-release. "I am married to Stephen, and we have a 2 year old girl called Belize who is just adorable. A number of John Island Camp staff (we figure about 18 to date) have gone to New Zealand to work for Josie at YMCA Camp Wainui. Her next recruitment drive is for the season starting September, 2006.

Brian Gray (Staff 1978 - 79)

Brian Gray is currently living near Zurich in Switzerland with his wife Andrea and son Russel. Russel is a seasoned John Island camper and is returning this summer to join the "Norquay" year of the leadership training program. Brian is on the Executive Board of Swiss Re (Insurance) as Head of Property and Specialty in the Products Business function. He obtained his MBA from the University of Toronto and has been with Swiss Re since 1985. Prior to joining the Executive Board in Zurich, he was President and CEO of Swiss Re Canada. Brian's e-mail address is brian_gray@bluewin.ch



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STRANGE LIFE FORMS.
WHY SHOULD
CAPTAIN KIRK
HAVE ALL THE FUN?

For children at YMCA Overnight Camp, each day is like a journey. With the careful guidance of our trained staff, their eyes are opened to a life less ordinary. They learn core values that will last forever.

They explore. They grow. They have fun.
You could say that they boldly go where few children have gone before. Isn't that what being a child is all about?

YCAMP

We build strong kids, strong leaders,
strong communities.

YMCA John Island Camp and YMCA Camp Falcona - Northern Ontario Traditions

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