



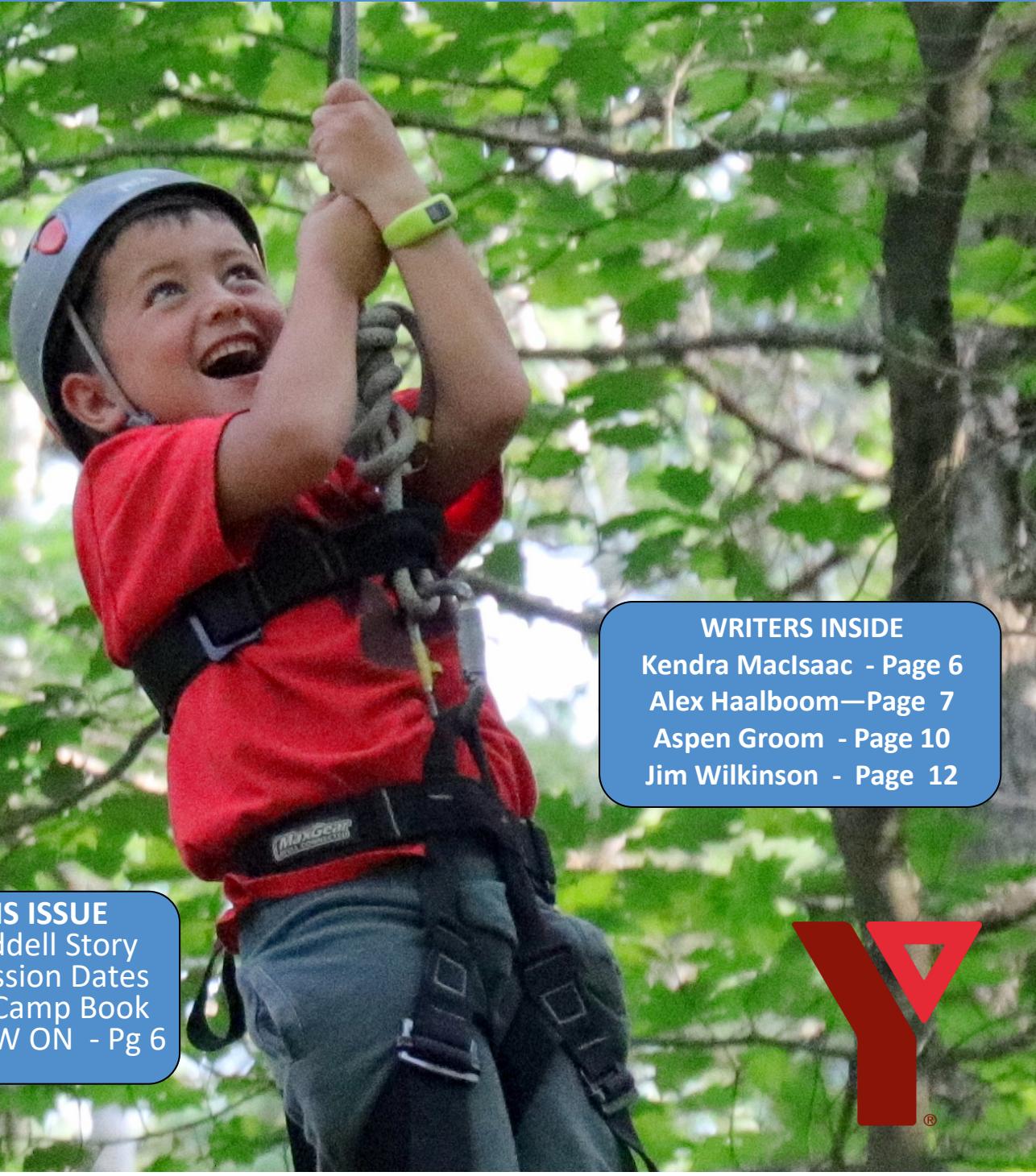
YMCA JOHN ISLAND

Fall 2021

# ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

*The official newsletter of the John Island Camp Alumni and Friends of John Island Camp*

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**SPECIAL THIS ISSUE**  
The Jody Waddell Story  
2022 Camp Session Dates  
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# A Summer Like No Other

Its getting close to the end! The end of the summer, that is. I am sitting in a lone Muskoka chair by the picnic table in front of the dining hall. It is sunny, hot and very quiet - except for the sounds of squirrels sending their cries out to any others that might hear.

All of a sudden my trance is disturbed by the clang of a fresh green and sappy pine cone dropping onto the hot tin roof of the dining hall. A magnificent doe walks through the camp on her way to the water followed by a fawn still displaying the spots of it's youth. Beautiful!

How did I deserve this peace and tranquility, this beauty and artistry of nature, the pure air and refreshingly clean water and the peace of mind that comes with understanding that I am one with everything else that surrounds me.

But I am not alone. The thousands of youth who have been part of this camp have all left a bit of themselves here in this place. Their laughter is here in the branches of the trees that brush against the sky as the warm breezes pass through. Their victory cries at overcoming a long standing challenge on the ropes course echoes through Millie's Grove and beyond. The chatter and chuckles of new found friends provides for a symphony of shouts from cabin mates as their bodies hit the cool water as they race into the lake. The delicate sound of well controlled paddles as campers navigate their canoes and kayaks

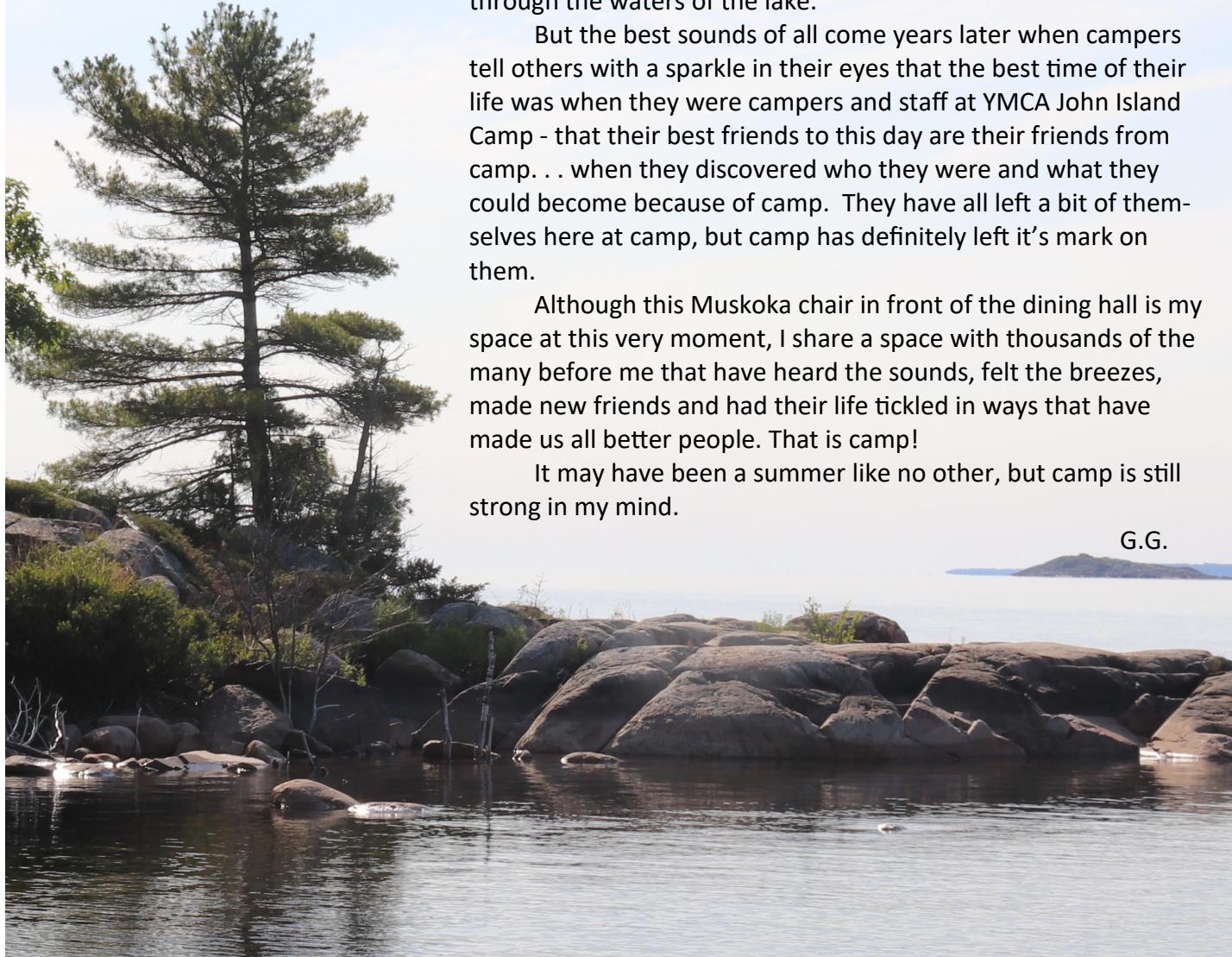
through the waters of the lake.

But the best sounds of all come years later when campers tell others with a sparkle in their eyes that the best time of their life was when they were campers and staff at YMCA John Island Camp - that their best friends to this day are their friends from camp... when they discovered who they were and what they could become because of camp. They have all left a bit of themselves here at camp, but camp has definitely left it's mark on them.

Although this Muskoka chair in front of the dining hall is my space at this very moment, I share a space with thousands of the many before me that have heard the sounds, felt the breezes, made new friends and had their life tickled in ways that have made us all better people. That is camp!

It may have been a summer like no other, but camp is still strong in my mind.

G.G.



# ... Here is What It Was Like!



It was the second summer without being able to provide regular camp programming, but there was lots going on. In an effort to keep the camp operating during the covid-19 pandemic and restrictions, it was decided to operate like a provincial park. This resulted in a rental scheme whereby cabins could be rented by families or other adult groups. The camp provided clean cabins, good drinking water, washrooms, showers and our remarkable beach.

For an additional cost, canoes and kayaks could be rented, blocks of time with a program specialist could be purchased and take-out meals (lunch and dinner) could be bought. It was a huge variance for our staff to adapt to and certainly an unknown in regard to how this would all be accepted.

To prepare, the camp's water system was activated and water tested, the generator was on during the day hours as normal, and the camp was set up to resemble a normal camp summer. In addition, each cabin was equipped with a picnic table and a small fire pit.

There was one huge question mark as we prepared to start - would we get any business?

With a staff of 14, the first day arrived. While the season began slowly, the number of groups renting cabins increased and by the end of the summer, well over 100 groups took advantage of the program. A large number of cabin rentals were camp alumni who came with their children and, of course, their dogs. Some were alumni who had met at John Island and many had not returned to the camp in over 20 years.

We also undertook a few work projects described on page 6.



Most notable were the first new Bunkie for staff accommodation and a beautiful new steel room put on Eagle/Talon cabin (Senior cabin to us from decades past). We also added two new elements to our high ropes course - a "flying squirrel" and a "leap of faith". Due to many challenges of high maintenance costs, legislative requirements and programming inefficiencies, the 20 year old zip line was removed as the new elements were added. The response was very positive amongst families.

As long as our water levels remain at high levels, a much enhanced entrance to the camp by boat resulted from a dedicated effort by staff and volunteers to remove all of the remains of previous docks and cribs and foreign materials, flower and vegetable gardens have been established and fresh coats of paint to many buildings was applied.

# Alumni ... Friends

## ...Forever!

A common phenomenon felt by camp alumni occurs when they meet up with friends made at camp years ago.....within minutes the relationship begins where it left off years ago. This past summer, alumni from many decades of John Island's history converged at the camp and relationships were renewed. In several cases, children discovered where their parents first met . For others, meeting again after decades of not being at camp together was a joyous occasion.

It was an exciting summer for a camp full of dogs as well. It seems most camp families are dog lovers and we had several dozen makes and models gracing the sands of John Island Camp this summer. These ranged from a huge Newfoundland dog and a Bermadoodle to a miniature dachshund.

Overnight camps are memorable experiences for many reasons. At the top of the list, is friends - new friends and old friends. Much of the music that our alumni will recall bring back thoughts of those precious days at John Island. Suzy Wilde, in her special anniversary John Island Song, says:

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

And in the song, "John Island is the Best", alumni will recall the final verse -

*"On a cold winter's day  
I think of the memories of the way  
We first met on those island shores  
And I met the friend that I adore  
. . . And will forever more.  
Na na na na na na na  
Some things never change!"*



Stephen Baird and Tracy Smith with their 3 children and dog Newman, renewed their friendship with Colin and Tammy Veevers and their three children and dog Murphy and Andrea Grotoli and her daughter.

## Alumni...Friends... *Forever!* (cont'd)



Mike Anderson an with wife Stacey, children Sam and Libby with their dog Cedar.



Kayaks always provide a lot of fun...and challenges!

## What's Happening This Spring at John Island Camp

With the changing situation with Covid-19 restrictions, Outdoor Education programs this spring are hoped to happen and registrations will be starting soon. In addition to the school groups registered for Outdoor Education, alumni may want to take note of some of these dates:

- Rotary Club Weekend - May 14th - 15th
- Amatol Weekend - May 27th - 29th
- Girl Guide Weekend - June 3rd - 5th
- Spring Work Weekend - June 3rd - 5th
- Womens' Wellness Weekend - June 10 - 12th
- Alumni Weekend - June 24th - 26th
- Camp Quality Week - July 2nd - 8th

### Annual Work Weekend Coming June 3rd in 2022

It is not always that one of the most popular weekends at camp is centered around work and getting the camp ready for summer. Families, alumni and adult volunteers get together for a weekend of work and fun. There are always a myriad of tasks to do at this time of year to get camp ready and everyone's help is always appreciated. If you are interested, send an e-mail to [kendra.macisaac@ymcaneo.ca](mailto:kendra.macisaac@ymcaneo.ca) to register. There is no cost to register, but registrations are required to ensure we have enough accommodation and food. More details will be available on the camp facebook page in the new year.

# Kendra MacIsaac New Vice President of YMCA

Hello JIC Campers, Alumni, Supporters and Friends,

I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you all. My name is Kendra MacIsaac, and I am the Vice President of Health and Wellness. As of April 1st, YMCA John Island camp now falls under the department that I oversee. This to me, is a natural step as **camp is health and wellness**.

I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you and I have been fortunate to visit camp many times over the years- work weekends, popping in during family camp, supporting staff time off and bringing my own kids to camp for their JIC camp experience.

Now being able to directly support camp is truly something that I am looking forward to. Especially coming out of 2 summers with no traditional camp, our opportunity to refresh camp, but with the same values and traditions that make John Island the special place that it is, is exciting.

Some of you will know that Aspen Groom has moved on to a new opportunity and we are actively recruiting for new camp leadership. If you have any questions or want to chat at any time, please do not hesitate to reach out! I can be reached at [kendra.macisaac@ymcaneo.ca](mailto:kendra.macisaac@ymcaneo.ca) or 705-674-8315 ext. 7311

Camp registration is slated to open on January 12th using our new online registration system. There may be a few bumps in the road, but know that we are committed to ensuring camp registration is as seamless as possible and we will have staff available to support along the way.

Lastly, I look forward to seeing many of you over the course of next season and if you're in Sudbury and want to connect before that, let me know! We have a great coffee shop in the Y and what you may not know is that Gary shares his baking all winter long with our team here. ☺

Kind Regards,

Kendra MacIsaac (she/her)



Kendra with sons Kade and Hughie



YMCA JOHN ISLAND

YMCA John Island Camp

## SILENT AUCTION

On Line - On Facebook - Right Now



You will find it on the JIC Facebook page  
YMCA John Island Camp (OFFICIAL)

**Bidding Now Underway**  
**Auction ends at 4:00 pm, Friday Dec. 10**  
**Keep Watching - More items will be added**



# “I said a Boom – Haal-Boom!”

## Me, all my siblings, and one very special place

by Alex Haalboom

If you’re reading this, it is likely self-evident to you that John Island Camp is a magical place. Like many of you, my siblings and I were lucky enough to spend our summers on the North Channel of Lake Huron. Like many of you, we found something in each other, and in ourselves, that needed a little sand-scrubbing to light up and shine brightly.

I discovered JIC when I was 14 years old. I was on a mission on the family computer, asking Jeeves, Yahoo, and Google to help me find a summer adventure. I’d gone to overnight camp since before I could remember but had aged out of the programs at my childhood camp (our Mum worked at Doe Lake Girl Guide Camp in her teens, and still has the friends and the skills to prove it. I’m forever grateful that she chose to pass that experience on to her kids). And then I found it. John Island Camp. A sliver of an Island in some big, watery mystery that was the North Channel. A five-day canoe trip for my age group, sailing, high ropes, drama... everything my (admittedly nerdy) little heart could dream of!

That first summer is burned into my memory. I was totally overwhelmed and terrifically shy when I met the others in my cabin, and piled into the boat for the long chug across the water. There was so much happening. So many reunions, traditions, challenges, ideas... I probably didn’t speak more than two words for the first five days I spent on the Island. But I loved it. I was drinking it in.

Camp would remain a deep obsession for the next decade of my life. It was, bar none, the biggest influence on my teenage years and early twenties, and (like it has done for so many of us), it shaped much of who I am as a person. After a year of really terrible bullying in grade nine, a summer at camp reminded me that I was a funny, intelligent, capable person – that I deserved friendship, and that I could overcome obstacles. The confidence I gained in Greenways led me to making some big shifts at home – applying for a magnet program at a different high school, meeting new friends, pursuing student leadership opportunities. I am fortunate to have had a very positive and affirming high school experience. I don’t know if that would have been the case if I hadn’t gone to JIC.

At John Island, I learned to paddle, sail, climb, stay safe in the outdoors, read the flow of a river. I learned to plan menus and balance budgets. I learned to lead/heard/console/wrangle unruly 5-year-olds and 15-year-olds. I

learned that challenges can actually be fun (and often funny) when you can work through them and laugh about them as a team. I learned to be resilient when things didn’t go as planned, to be open to new friends and ideas and experiences. I learned to be extremely creative. The soft skills that I developed during those years at camp - speaking with, and more importantly, really listening to, everyone that I worked with - are my most important assets. They are skills that have carried me, and continue to carry me, as I wander this very confusing path we call ‘adulthood’!



Haalboom siblings the last time we were all in the same place (Christmas 2019)

Alex, Sarah, Nellie (the dogf) Jackie, Shon and Max

Continued on next page . . . ;

## "I said a Boom – Haal-Boom!" (Cont'd from previous page)

And of course, John Island has given me the deepest, strongest, very best friendships. Some lasted a summer, and others will last a lifetime. It never ceases to amaze me how often new friendships spring up because of a JIC connection. I guess we've all still got a bit of that sand wedged between our toes...

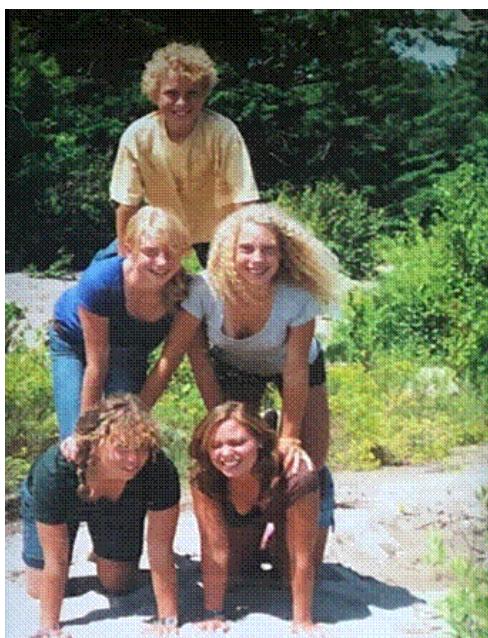
Being the oldest of 5 kids, I did my very best to ensure that my siblings understood that John Island was absolutely the greatest place on the planet. That we were all bitten by the JIC bug (literally and figuratively; we're all obsessed but we've also donated many pints to the Northern Ontario blackflies) has been one of the most important experiences we've shared as a family. There are ten years and the advent of the smartphone separating us in age and experience. It's been super special for our family to have a common place, language, and story through camp.

Between the five of us, we've spent 52 summers at JIC (as well as at least 11 Springs and three Falls). Taken together, we've lived in every cabin and tent plat except for the Boathouse (and Gary's Tent, of course!). We have been volunteers, counsellors, managers, trippers, Greenway and Norquay leaders, Waterfront Director, Sailing specialist, Nurse, and Camp Director. We even had our own campfire song: "I said a Boom, Haal-a-BOOM!" (sung to the tune of the classic Boom-Chicka-Boom).

It's been a few years now since any of us spent the summer at John Island, but we've all kept a spirit of adventure and the confidence to challenge ourselves, to learn, and to explore. The pull we've all felt to travel and to spend our time outside is inspired by the positive experiences we all had at camp. As I write this, the five of us are spread across five different provinces and territories. Some of us are living with friends or partners we met because of John Island. Even our online experiences are influenced by JIC: we've tried to make our family "Zoom visits" more fun by playing games or solving puzzles together, no doubt inspired by rainy day camp activities.

I continue to be surprised by how often the attitudes, skills, ideas, and relationships I developed at JIC have a direct influence on how I live my life. This pandemic has been extremely challenging in so many ways. And yet I have resilience, creativity, pragmatism, and optimism that I know were fostered during my years learning how to be the best version of myself at John Island. I see these qualities in my siblings and friends; this year I have felt so fortunate to have a support system full of inspiring people that are also incredibly kind, empathetic, and thoughtful. Perhaps more than ever, I can see how my own growth, and that of my brother, sisters, and many of our best friends, stems from seeds that were planted at John Island.

Like it is for so many of you, John Island Camp is part of who I am. It is part of my family. One of these days, we'll get back there to wreak some havoc on Family Camp. After all, it will be important to share the family obsession... er, passion... with the next generation. Learning to live (and thrive) with sand in your shoes is a surprisingly important life lesson.





### Special Memorial Bench

Winning bid in the fall JIC auction, this memorial bench was placed overlooking the beach as requested

### Eagle-Talon Cabin Upgraded

In a special project this summer, Eagle-Talon cabin was upgraded by the Sudbury Rotary Club, assisted by volunteers Jody Waddell, Brian O'Neill, Dave Hunt, Drew Beaumont. The double cabin now sports a new tin roof, fresh trim and paint, as well as new sliding doors inside to separate the sleeping wings from the centre common room.



### High Ropes Course Gets New Elements

The camp expanded its number of elements available as part of its exciting and challenging high ropes course. The 'Leap of Faith' (shown here) and the "Flying Squirrel" were added.



# GETTING CAUGHT UP

### High Water Level Ebbing

It seemed that after years of declining water levels in Lake Huron, that we would never see 'normal' levels again. Then 4 years ago, up they came to record highs. This past summer we noticed it was heading down again. We may see low water docks again - somewhere.

### First Bunkie Gets Erected

Thanks goes to the Amatol group of volunteers together with our alumni volunteers Jody Waddell and Dave Hunt for getting our first "Bunkie" of the ground. These cabins are the same size as the staff tent platforms and will start replacing the tents which have become increasingly difficult to obtain.



### 2021 Staff Small, But Effective

They had to import an ancient alumni member and 3 dogs to make the numbers look bigger, but this small number of staff proved to be highly effective in the operation of the camp. This staff kept the camp clean and covid free, cooked hundreds of take-out meals for those renting cabins, ran well over one hundred program blocks for guests (including archery, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, high ropes adventures, arts and crafts, nature walks, and beach fun), operated our boats and kept the camp operating efficiently.

Response from the guests (including a large number of alumni and their families) was very positive and included a number of donations to the camp to help keep it active.

# GENDER IN CAMPING

## PART 5 - WHAT IF I FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE?

### UNPACKING YOUR OWN FEELINGS OF DISCOMFORT AND PREJUDICE

By Aspen Groom



Over the last series of newsletters Gary has allowed me to write about inclusion of folks of different gender identities, and today I am writing about something a bit more general. The question “*what if I feel uncomfortable?*” is paraphrased from a question raised after an inclusion and diversity meeting. My first reaction was that it is likely a question that others are feeling, but feel nervous to raise out of fear of being seen as dumb or offensive.

You will notice that the second part of the title is “*Unpacking your own feelings of discomfort and prejudice*” and this might feel like a statement of judgement. You might feel defensive, or angry in response, and that is all normal. I would argue that very few people are deliberately harmful to others, but many are accidentally hurtful. I would also add that feeling uncomfortable does not always mean that harm is being done to you, you should carefully consider this before you react to situations that cause you discomfort.

#### Part 1: Understanding our thoughts and feelings

Let's get started with a scenario:

*You are entering your favourite restaurant and it is a busy day. You had plans of getting your favourite meal but, you notice a large group of folks who appear to have some sort of cognitive disabilities. They are loud and taking up a lot of space, which has made it challenging for you to get a table and enjoy your meal.*

My bet is most folks would have a sense of frustration with the group outlined above. That a group that is being loud and taking up a lot of space would be annoying when you just wanted to go have a nice meal in your favourite place. I would also guess that as much as we don't need the information about folks appearing to have cognitive disabilities, that changes how we react to the scenario.

We might have more patience, we might feel afraid of being judged if we say something, or we might feel uncomfortable, in ways that we would not with able bodied folks. These feelings are valid. **The part we need to be cautious about is how we treat others base on our feelings.**

#### Part 2: How we treat others based on our perceptions

The next important part in treating folks equitably. Someone might be challenging for us to understand, but we should always question if we are about to treat them differently because of that difference alone.

I have lived for a long time in a world as someone who was gendered as a woman, and now I often get gendered as a man, regardless of identifying as a nonbinary person. Something I can say with certainty is that I get treated way better when people think I am a man. Men are far nicer to me – far less condescending.

The reason I offer this is because when unpacking our own feelings of discomfort and prejudice, we must ask ourselves if our actions are different because someone fits into a different group. If you would not do something to one person and would do it to another based on perception that implies there is some sort of pre-judgement that you are using to determine how you should treat them.

So let's recap:

Having the understanding that if someone makes us uncomfortable, that we are responsible for our thoughts and feelings, AND

Using our awareness to reflect on if we are treating people differently based on our perceptions of them, or them being part of a specific group.

Once we have unpacked these two simple sounding but complex tasks. We can do

#### Part 3: What should I do if I feel uncomfortable, with a person, group etc.?

This is where we must apply the two pieces to real world situations.

Example 2: Masculine person in the woman's change room.

*Let's say that you are a woman who has just entered the women's change room. When you enter you see a very masculine looking person. They have broad shoulders and seem much bigger than a "typical" woman. Your reaction is to feel nervous, like there should not be a man in there. This person is just getting changed in the change room – what should you do?*

Cont'd on next page)

# What's Up for 2022?

With covid-19 affecting the life of every overnight camp these past two years, it is good to look ahead and see what is planned for the summer of 2022 at YMCA John Island Camp. While the effects of the pandemic are not over and plans will be up for adjustments if necessary.

This is what is currently planned for 2022 at YMCA John Island Camp with registration open on Jan. 12th

## Camper Programs

- Saplings - Aug. 8th to 12th`
- Youth Camp "A" - July 10th to 22nd
- Youth Camp "B" - July 24th to Aug. 5th
- Adventure Camp "A" - Aug. 14 th to 19th
- Adventure Camp "B" - Aug. 21st to 26th

## **Tripping Programs**

- Explorer Canoe - July 10th to 22nd
- Sea Kayakers - July 24th to Aug. 5th
- Trekkers - Aug. 14th to Aug. 26th

## **Leadership Programs**

- Greenway "A" - July 11th to Aug. 5th
- Greenway "B" - July 31st to Aug. 26th
- Norquay - July 11th to Aug. 26th
- Souquay - July 31st to Aug. 26th

## **Family Programs**

- Oaks and Acorns - June 17th to 19th
- Family Camp - Aug. 28th to Sept. 3rd

## **Adult Programs**

- Women's Wellness Weekend—June 10th to 12th
- Alumni Weekend - June 24th to 26th

## **NEW STUFF in 2022**

**Saplings** - an overnight camping experience for first time campers and younger children

**Souquay** - Many 15 and 16 year old campers missed out on Greenway and Norquay experiences due to covid-19 closures. This is an advanced canoe tripping program for 17 year olds

**Oaks and Acorns**— an overnight camp experience for young campers with parents.

## **GENDER IN CAMPING** (Cont'd from previous page)

When thinking of next steps, you should first consider Part 1. You might feel uncomfortable because this is unexpected, but is this person doing anyone harm? Next consider part 2: would you treat this person differently if they appeared different? Have you made a judgement of them based on their appearance alone?

My bet is when considering all these questions you will conclude they are not hurting anyone, and you would treat them differently if they appeared different.

Remember your feelings of discomfort are not hurting you. They will pass. That person in the changeroom likely knows where they are and feel like they should be there. That is enough.

**If you feel uncomfortable you have the power to leave, but we must work together to allow everyone regardless of appearance, race, drug use, gender, sexual orientation, and ability to exist in the world, without being questioned or bothered.**

Next newsletter we will talk about how to grow from those feelings of discomfort!



# Jim Wilkinson Remembers

. . . and looks ahead

Sitting on the shores of The North Channel at our camp on Aird Island, my mind reflects on my youth and the immensely

important role the YMCA had on my life. My parents were merchants in Sudbury and worked 9am-6pm six days a week. They enrolled me in the local Y at an early age and it became my day care centre when such things did not exist. Every day I went to the Y as an alternative to going home after school.

Swimming, gymnastics, basketball, volleyball, ping pong, Y-Phi, etc. with (my friend? Y employee?) Ralph Erskine. As I grew up I took on leadership rolls that allowed me to share my skills with those younger as a volunteer - The back bone of the YMCA. Learning; sharing;

leading; and growing in a harmonious setting where I befriended mentors and became a mentor for so many. These experiences played such an important roll in my youth and shaped my life and the family and friends in it....

The summers brought new challenges to our family. My parents couldn't have an eight year old working in the store (even in 1952) so the only option was the John Island YMCA camp. I'll never forget boarding the bus to leave my parents for a month, heading into a strange new world that was so foreign to me. The peer

pressure and competitions in archery, crafts, canoeing, and water sports seemed unending... The embarrassment of skit night and camp fire sing songs. Battling poison ivy and mosquitoes, portages and tents, cabin raids and polar bear club. Did I need all of these stresses without mom and dad? These were tough times that you always seem to remember more than the easy ones.

The friendships developed were everlasting.

It has always been a phobia of mine that my generation has had such an ideal life. How would we cope with the hardships that many in other parts of the world have endured. Although not

comparable, the camp life as a youth did give us a different and more resilient perspective... Instead of hanging out at the big city shopping malls we were confronting challenges and overcoming adversity. I have encouraged my children and grandchildren to understand the importance emersion in nature plays in a happy and healthy life. Collecting camp fire wood, strategizing mosquito defences, big water paddling, long canoe trip survival, military cabin inspection, distance swimming to earn another badge or life saving credential... These are experiences that shape a person's character and influence who they become. They are the content of the stories that have been told countless times with John Island peers throughout our lives. Certainly throughout mine...

# Jim Wilkinson Remembers. . . and looks ahead!

(Continued)

Of course, not all those memories are ones of hardship. The massive JIC beach, the tuck shop, the Chrysal clear waters, Mrs Minors Chelsea buns, chapel point, Kismet trips, fishing off the dock, 'good night campers', learning a new skill and then teaching it to others, the CIT program, becoming a counsellor and then staff (for some), are all wonderful experienced burned into many memories.

So how do we give back or make sure such experiences can and will be shared by future generations? Some of us still volunteer at the JIC facility. Having visited last week I was very impressed with what I saw. Much has been accomplished with former camper elbow grease! Others have contributed financially when a call for help arrived. However, most of us have lost contact. We've moved to other areas, consumed by our day to day lives... forgetting that it was John Island Camp that played such a pivotal part of shaping those lives.

May I suggest to the wonderful JIC alumni that a foundation be formed. This foundation will accept and receive donations on an ongoing basis, creating a source of funds that can be drawn on to ensure the ongoing viability of the camp and property. Contributions can be made when it is convenient to the contributor and not necessarily at a moment of crisis at the ultimate request of the JIC. I would be honoured to make the establishing donation.

The YMCA and John Island Camp are a force for good in this world. They have touched, shaped, and molded generations of youth into more resilient, empathetic, and caring men and women. Let's ensure that they continue to do so.

Good night campers...



Monica Wilkinson, Gary Gray and Jim Wilkinson on the John Island beach



**YMCA JOHN ISLAND**

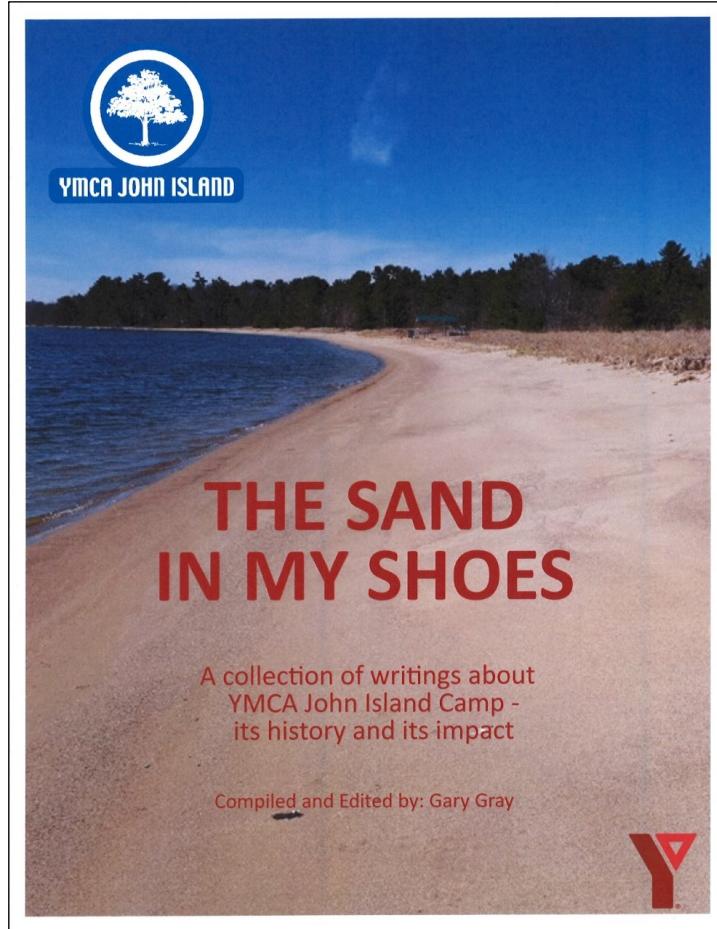
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- Facts about the lumber mill days
- Builders of the camp tell their stories
- Over 50 personal impact stories
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**\$25.00**

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**To order your copy....**

Contact Gary Gray at the YMCA at: [gary.gray@ymcaneo.ca](mailto:gary.gray@ymcaneo.ca) with your name, mailing address and e-mail address.



This book is a project of the YMCA John Island Camp Alumni in support of the YMCA through John Island Camp





Jody with his wife Karen



Jody, Andrew discussing job with friend



Electrician Don Harrison and Jody installing new generator in 2012



Jody working on new steps in 2020

# A True John Island Camp Story

When you start talking to people about John Island Camp, a number of names come up automatically. Amongst that group of names will undoubtedly be Jody Waddell. Jody's relationship with John Island started when he was a tyke brought out to camp by his parents, Don and Mary and quickly found his place sitting on the new to camp orange tractor. There was a happy and smiling kid. Speed ahead several decades to 2021 and there is Jody, a happy and smiling adult sitting on an old to camp refabricated yellow tractor with another smiling tyke by his side. Andrew. Andrew is Jody's son.

Between the tyke years and the present time Jody has experienced much of what John Island Camp is meant to be. He has been a camper, gone through leadership training, been on staff and these later years has been a valued volunteer. He has brought front-end loaders out to camp to help erect the climbing wall and to dig trenches for water and electric lines. He has built docks, worked with volunteer groups building cabins and re-roofing buildings. And that is just the start.

But , that is not all. There's more! Jody is a licensed diesel mechanic working for VALE at various mining sites in the Sudbury area. Since John Island Camp has depended on diesel generators for it's 67 years to date, Jody's services and skill have kept the camp in power. He has always put the camp at the top of his list of priorities when there is a need and many sighs of relief can be heard throughout the camp when anyone proclaims, 'Jody's here!'

Whether its boats, quads, tractors, diesel generators, water pumps docks or camp buildings – Jody has probably been part of it. Jody is very symbolic of the dedication to the camp that played such an important part in helping shape the type of person he is and the type of parents he and Karen are to Andrew.

Now back to the tractor. It is often proclaimed in this age of climate concerns and pollution that it might be a good idea to complete the move away from tractors. Our guess is that when that final move is made, someone will discover away back in a wooded area of camp a piece of tarpaulin covering an old piece of machinery – a tractor. And if anyone looked closely they would find they could probably start that ancient piece of camp history with a simple push of a button. Jody would see to that.

# from eggs to nestlings (outside our window)

(for several weeks these red eyed vireo birds were part of our family)



Photos by G.Gray

# Thank You Alumni!

The last two years have not been easy - for anyone! For the staff, campers and parents of campers, it has been a time of turmoil, confusion and disappointment. Across this country many overnight camps for youth have closed, permanently. Many others have closed or downsized, temporarily.

YMCA John Island Camp is alive and well, thanks to the YMCA of which the camp is an integral part, its staff, Board of Directors and the Camp Alumni. Camp is important. Its impact is reflected over and over in the lives of too many to count. The Camp Alumni, and Friends of the Camp are amongst that group. Alumni support has been seen in many ways during the pandemic.

Alumni have volunteered in incredible fashion -

- when the camp needed funding to support having a small staff at the camp to keep systems such as water, power and boats functioning and the camp protected, the Alumni was there to support.
- when labour was required to build new facilities and repair older ones, the Alumni was there.
- when we needed families to rent cabins and come to the camp during this past summer, the Alumni were there with their families, again providing much needed revenue and camp FUN!
- when we needed articles written for our Alumni Newsletter during the past two years, the Alumni were there
- when the YMCA began its Resilience Campaign to raise \$2 million over the two Covid years, an amazing amount of support came from John Island Alumni who claimed the camp had a significant impact on their lives.
- when we recently started selling the John Island book "The Sand in My Shoes" to help raise funds for the camp, the Alumni was there and will continue to be as sales continue.
- when we asked for support for our 2020 and our current JIC Silent Auction, Alumni were there to donate items and to buy items in support of the camp.
- when alumni sought ways to help youth get to camp, they helped start the Alumni Bursary Fund.

We could go on and on. The need is still great, but we wanted to take this opportunity to say Thank You Alumni!





Until next year. . .

## JIC ALUMNI

Alumni and friends of the camp are the life blood of John Island Camp.

Our goal is to provide support to the ongoing life of the camp and to provide a means for alumni to keep engaged with the camp. There are several ways alumni can support the camp and keep it part of their lives.

- **Annual Spring and Fall Work Weekends - no special skills required**
  - Write for the Alumni Newsletter - your story will be read
  - Bring your family to Family Camp - many already do
- **Contribute to the JIC Capital Fund - help keep OUR camp in great shape**
  - Sponsor a camper - Any amount helps
  - **Contribute to the Alumni and Friends of JIC Bursary Fund**
    - Be a John Island Camp Ambassador

The YMCA John Island Camp Alumni Newsletter is published 2 times a year with semi occasional Special Editions.

For comments or to submit articles or content ideas: gary.gray@ymcaneo.ca  
Visit the John Island page on the website of the YMCA of Northeastern Ontario to access all past issues of this newsletter.

[www.ymcaneo.ca/john-island-camp](http://www.ymcaneo.ca/john-island-camp)

on Facebook: YMCA John Island Camp

