

History of Camp Wangoma 1956 – 1973

Camp Wangoma was an overnight camp operated by East York YMCA and the Toronto Y Camping Services

1956 – 1973. The Camp operated in the Madawaska Highlands thirty minutes east of Bancroft, just south of McArthur's Mills on the north end of Wanamaker Lake.

The history of the camp started in 1919 with Sunfish Camp on Sunfish Island run by Toronto Central Y. Due to the building of the Island Airport on Hanlan's Point the residents were moved to Sunfish Island (Olympic Island) in 1934. Sunfish Camp moved to a site south of Barrie on west side of Lake Simcoe operated by East York YMCA. Due to the growth of the population on Lake Simcoe the Y decided to move the Camp in 1955 to a former Private Camp on Lake Catchacoma. They rented the Camp for 1955 and the Camp was called Camp Woapka. The East York Y Camp Committee found during that time the site for Camp Wangoma which is the present day, Cedar Ridge Camp. The Camp started in 1956 and ran until 1973. As an Outdoor Education Centre, it ran from 1974 – 1978.

The Camp was sold in 1980 to the Pentecostal Church in Bancroft affiliated with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada). They ran Nature Land Bible Camp.

December 2005, the Bible Camp was sold to today's owners of Cedar Ridge Camp which has been in operation for sixteen years.

Camp Wangoma had not been in operation for over fifty years. During that time some staff communicated informally over the years. A Camp Wangoma website had been put together. A core group of us in the last ten years started getting together on a yearly basis as the Camp Wangoma Alumni at Cedar Ridge Camp. A lot of good memories were shared but nothing was documented.

In 2005 Danny Norse former camper and staff went to the Ontario Camps Association Archives at Trent University and all he found about Camp Wangoma were 1959, 1964 and 1966 brochures. I felt it was time to document the History of Camp Wangoma from Sunfish Camp to Cedar Ridge Camp. To me it was a time commitment that I could give for one year to process the material, encourage former staff and campers to write articles, to keep in touch with everyone involved. My commitment was from July 2021 to June 2022.

Through the website, reunions, networking and sleuthing I was able to get a list of 75 former Camp Wangoma Staff/Campers from over 50 years ago, who were interested in reading once a month about the History of Camp Wangoma and writing Articles. We started with 75 readers and we lost two going to Camp in Heaven and we gained two. We ended up with 75 readers at the end of the Twelve Editions of WANGOMATTERS.

WANGOMATTERS was the Camp Newsletter when Bob Nesbitt was the Camp Director 1964 -1967. So, I used the name with 50 YEARS LATER – Before the Memories Fade! The age range of campers and staff now 60 Years to 80 Years who would be reading the newsletter.

To make the Editions interesting I felt there needed to be the Camp Spirit of Fun in each article. So, I developed a template with the following headings Welcome, BIG THANK YOU to contributors, Saying, Humour, Things they didn't teach me in School, Article(s) and Reflection(s). I received some great feedback. "WANGOMATTER Editions are like a Forest Gump Box of Chocolates, you don't know what you are going to get, but they are always delicious!" I am very fortunate that I had some great contributors that have a passion for the camp. We covered each topic in great detail that sparked a lot of memories for a lot of former Camp Wangoma Staff and Campers. We have left a **Living Legacy for Camp Wangoma Staff/Campers** for future generations.

Submitted by Alf Grigg Honorary Life Member of the OCA on behalf of the Camp Wangoma Staff/Campers – June 2022

WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER – Before the Memories Fade!

INDEX OF THE TWELVE EDITIONS

The Twelve Editions of WANGOMATTERS each had the following template.

- Welcome/Announcements
- **BIG THANK YOU** to the contributors for the Edition
- Saying/Humour/Things we did not learn in School
- Article in regards to Camp Wangoma/Reflections

ARTICLES

- 1st Edition - History of Camp Wangoma Property by Durl Lott who lived on the Property.**
- 2nd Edition - History of McArthur Mills and Community by Mrs. Marjorie Slater – resident.**
- 3rd Edition - History of Sunfish Camp – Toronto Island – Archives Toronto Central Library.**
- 4th Edition - History of Sunfish Camp – Lake Simcoe – Innisfil Historical Society.**
- 5th Edition – Camp Woapak – Transition Camp between Camp Sunfish and Camp Wangoma.
By Brian Saracini former Camp Staff and one of the first Camp Wangoma Staff.**
- 6th Edition - Founding of Camp Wangoma/Cemetery by Bill Thorsteinson 2nd Camp Director.**
- 7th Edition – Early years of the Camp Wangoma site and camp programs by Durl and Eldin Lott – Camp Wangoma Staff.**
- 8th Edition – Tribute to Ivan Robinson first Camp Director/Interview with Bill Thorsteinson how he directed the Camp and Programs.
Camp Wangoma Song “We are the Boys from Wangoma” Paul Long 1966.
Camp Wangoma Song “Pull the Water” Ted Crouch 1970.**
- 9th Edition - Tribute to Bob Nesbitt 3rd Camp Director and Bill Wood 4th Camp Director
by Alf Grigg Camp Wangoma Staff
How the Camp got the Fire Truck by Bill Thorsteinson.**
- 10th Edition - Tribute to Rod Gleason 5th Camp Director/George Rodgers 6th Camp Director
by Alf Grigg Camp Wangoma Staff.
Tribute to Jordan Hill 7th Camp Director/Last years of Camp Wangoma run as
an Outdoor Education Centre by Andrew Harvie Camp Wangoma Staff.**
- 11th Edition - Tribute to Raymond Loney, Orpha Loney, Bob Coates and Bert Brownsberger
by Alf Grigg Camp Wangoma Staff.
Christie Street Boy’s Home/Value of Camp Wangoma and Bum Waddos 100.
Gary Asselstine from the Foster Home and Camper.**
- 12th Edition – Camp Wangoma Staff/Camper Alumni Contacts/Alumni have achieved by
Alf Grigg Camp Wangoma Staff.
Transition of Camp Wangoma to Outdoor Education Centre by Andrew Harvie.
Cedar Ridge Camp carrying on where Camp Wangoma left off by Graham Burke
Camp Director of Cedar Ridge Camp and Outdoor Education Centre.**

Links to other YMCA Camp Wangoma Resources:

Video link: <https://youtu.be/KvUCwGNSbCA>

Photo Album link: https://www.flickr.com/photos/camp_wangoma.alumni/albums

WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER
Before the Memories Fade
First Edition

July 2021

Welcome to the First Edition of WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER. There is a saying “Life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer you get to the end of the roll the quicker your life seems to go!” I have been very fortunate to gather information and archive materials on Camp Wangoma over the years. It’s time to share with those of us who were Camp Wangoma Staff or Campers who attended Camp Wangoma before the meaningful memories for us fade. I am willing to put together the WANGOMATTERS once a month for a year. The content would be a saying, humour, things they never taught us in school, a piece on Camp Wangoma history, reflection on our memories of Camp. If you would like to submit any information under any categories or add a new category, send me an email wangoma1967@gmail.com I will make sure it gets in one of the Editions of WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER.

Saying

“I must warn you there is magic about camping. It gets into your blood and once there you cannot get it out. It will stay with your life.” Barry Lowes – 1962

Humour

Before my surgery the anesthesiologist offered to knock me out with gas or a boat paddle. It was an either oar situation.

What do you call a beach that keeps losing sand? “A shore loser”

A Police Officer came to my house and asked me where I was between 5 & 6. He seemed irritated when I answered: “Kindergarten”

They Never Taught Us This In, School

“Get off your High Horse”

Before cars, owning a horse was a sign of prominence, since nobility and high, ranking military officials were primarily the ones who owned them. Getting off your horse meant to humble yourself.”

Camp Wangoma Video 2020

Link: <https://youtu.be/KvUCwGNSbCA>

Camp Wangoma History

The following information is taken from "Some History of the Cedar Ridge Camp Property" compiled by Durl E. W. Lott – June 2015

SOME HISTORY OF THE CEDAR RIDGE CAMP PROPERTY

It was a long walk for a three, year old! That three, year old was me, Durl Lott. I remember walking with my mother, Eva, my eight, year old brother Burl, and my ten, year old sister Remona, following the horse drawn wagon on which was loaded the last of our belongings. We were moving to our new home. My younger brother Eldin would be born the year following in the new home. The home was the original farm house located on the farm and lake front property owned by Mr. A.B. (Ben) Ivy, a property surrounding the north end of Long Lake (now Wannamaker Lake). Mr. Ivy was a business man who lived in Port Dover, Ontario and own and operated a pavilion type dance hall. He had a seasonal home built on the lake front where the present Cedar Ridge Lodge now is located. This home replaced an older house that had been located farther back on the property, closer to the creek which runs out of the lake. In my earliest memory this house was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Nunn and their daughter Sylvia who became a friend of my sister's and would walk to school with her.

Although I have not been able to substantiate the identity of original owners, my sister believes that the property was originally owned by John Hannah, who in 1876 was married to Julia Ann Lott, a relative of mine. It is believed that it was during their tenure that the property was cleared and worked as a farm. It was during this time that a tragedy took place, the account of which has been passed down through the generations. In July of 1899 Albert, the son of John and Julia Hannah, were attending a religious service held on the shore of Long Lake (Wannamaker) Lake. The service was probably held on the shore of the lake to facilitate a water baptism. At some point Albert decided to take his friend Ella Maxwell for a ride in a small boat. Some distance from shore, but still in sight of the congregation both Albert and Ella ended up in the water and drowned. Albert born in May 1879, would have just been past his 20th birthday. I have no record of Ella's age but I would assume she would have been near Albert's age. One can only imagine the shock and disbelief of the crowd on the shore as they helplessly watched these two young people lose their lives.

I have no record as to when the Hannah's sold the property or from whom Mr. Ben Ivy purchased it. However, according to my older sister at least two other families lived in the farm house before we moved there but did not own the property.

In 1942 Mr. Ivy hired my father, Frank Lott, to live in the farmhouse, to work the farm and care for the property, all the work being done by horse drawn machinery although I remember a Ford tractor being purchased, before we left the farm. My dad's work also included cutting, saw logs and firewood during the winter months. Another job which took place during the winter months was that of cutting ice. Lake ice would be cut into manageable blocks, loaded onto a horse drawn sleigh and taken to a building known as the

“Ice house”. One Ice house was located near the Ivy residence and another near the farmhouse which was just north of the present barn. There the blocks would be stacked in the middle of the building until they formed a large cube of ice which filled up most of the building. Then, sometime before the weather turned warm, sawdust would be drawn from the local sawmill, approximately three miles down the road and placed over and around the ice to keep it from melting. This cube of ice would last during summer and was our refrigerator where we kept our perishable foods. We had no electricity and consequently no refrigerators.

Another event that stands out in my memory while we lived on the Ivy property was the burning of the barn! The year was approximately 1944. My father had just finished cutting and storing the hay in the barn. The hay, of course, would be used for winter feed for the animals. In fact, the last load of hay was still on the wagon inside the barn. Being Sunday afternoon, my father, who had been working hard during the week, had reclined for a nap when he was startled by the reflection on the wall. He jumped up, looked out the window and saw the barn engulfed in flames, having been struck by lightning. Some friends and neighbours arrived. They were able to save the other buildings and some of the animals but the rest was lost in flames. After the tragedy had been assessed, material was purchased, a barn raising bee was organized and the barn that still stands on the property was constructed.

It was not long after the barn burning incident that our life would take another turn. Mr. Ben Ivy would negotiate the sale of the property to the Potts family from Niagara Falls. This family included father, Frank, his son and wife, Fred, Jenny and Jack. All the property was sold with the exception of a cottage lot next to White Birch Haven which Mr. Ivy kept, constructed what is now the Ivy Cottage and used as a summer cottage for a number of years. The Potts family moved to the area and lived permanently in the Ivy summer home at the north end of the lake where the present lodge is located. Their purpose in purchasing the property was to develop a tourist resort which they would call, “Whispering Pine Lodge”. My father was hired to continue working for them and living in the farm house but the type of work would change. Farming took on a secondary role while my father who was also a carpenter began to build tourist cabins. Along with other hired help the cabins which are now located from the main lodge to the old boat house were built. The Ivy house where the Pott’s lived was converted to the main lodge and a tourist resort was born, operating for a number of years.

It was during the ownership of the Pott’s family that my father decided to buy his own property about a mile down the road and as nine years old I found myself once again following the wagon load of belongings to our next home and walking away from direct contact with the Long (Wannamaker) Lake property.

I did not have direct contact with the property over the next few years, my knowledge of what took place is somewhat sketchy. I do know, however, that the property was sold to East York YMCA, for the purpose of developing a summer camper for boys. The existing tourist cabins would accommodate boys in the 8 -10 year old range and would be known as “The Adventurer” section of the camp. Cabins were built on the east side of the lake for the

“Pioneer” section for 10 - 12 years old. The new cabins on the west side of the lake were a little more rustic and would be the Frontier section. They could be recommended to move on to the “Voyageur” section located in tents further up the west shore of the lake and they would be trained for future counselors. The present dining hall was constructed to feed 127 boys and staff.

In the summer of 1960, I would once again become part of the life on the property where I had spent six years of my childhood. My Uncle Raymond Loney worked as the maintenance coordinator for the YMCA Camp Wangoma and learned they needed another counselor. He mentioned my name to the then director, Ivan Robinson, and in turn I became part of the Wangoma staff taking up residence in cabin one of the Adventurer Section and worked on the camp program staff for the next three summers. My brother Eldin was also hired as part of the camp maintenance staff. We both would recall those years in which we met and became friends of many wonderful and talented people. Let me say that Ivan Robinson who hired me and directed the camp during the first year of my employment was one of the most charismatic and talented leaders that I have ever been associated with. Bill Thorstensen who became the next camp director after Ivan ranked up there as well. I thoroughly enjoyed working for both of these directors.

After spending three summers working for Camp Wangoma, I moved out of the Hartsmere area and my summers became a time for educational courses. I lost contact with the camp. I learned that the camp property was subsequently sold to the Pentecostal Church represented by Rev. William Bowler and later his son Todd. Summer program and some winter activities were run. The camp was renamed “Nature Land” and continued to operate until after Rev. Bowler’s illness and death. Some time after his death the property was sold again and became “Cedar Ridge Camp” and after a number of upgrades operates as a youth camp running both summer and winter programs. I recently visited the camp to renew some old memories and was greeted with friendliness and cordiality. I wish the Cedar Ridge Camp owners and staff all the best. I look forward to get to know them better.

Reflections

I remember 150 plates of liver being served in the dining hall for supper. With 150 plates of liver being taken back into the kitchen. Brown sugar sandwiches hit their all time high that supper.

Alf Grigg Camp Wangoma Staff – 1964 1971

Cocker and I had just each purchased a helmet they wore in tanks in the war surplus store in Bancroft. We were heading to Toronto in my 1964 Volks Wagon and Cocker was sitting beside me with his helmet on holding onto a boat steering wheel like he was driving the car. At that time an attendant filled our gas tank. The attendant came out and we drove him crazy for five minutes trying to figure out who was driving and where to find the opening for the gas tank.

Alf Grigg Camp Wangoma Staff – 1964 -1971

WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER
Before the Memories Fade
Second Edition

August 2021

Welcome to the Second Edition of WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER. There is a saying “Experience – making all futures, the fruits of all the pasts.” A special Thank You to the following Wangoma Staff to shared their fruits of the past:

- Carl Sills for sharing his great memories of camp.
- Cam Smith who shared two Camp Wangoma Staff lists for 1967 and 1968. Also, sending me two original copies of Wangomatters.
- Brian Saracini for sharing information on the History of Sunfish Camp, the Globe and Mail newspaper article on Sunfish Camp, photos of Sunfish Camp and information on Camp Waopak (the transition camp between Sunfish Camp and Camp Wangoma).

This information will be shared in future editions of WANGOMATTER – 50 YEARS LATER. If you would like to submit any information under any categories or add a new category, send me an email wangoma1967@gmail.com

Special Events

Congratulations to Doug Millington Camp Wangoma Staff 1967-1968 for swimming a kilometer of the North Thumber Land Strait raising funds for Conservation. Doug was first in his class and the 70 years plus class.

9th Annual Wangoma Invitational Golf Tournament – Friday October 15, 2021 at a Bancroft Golf Course. Details coming mid September. Guests invited. Usual rules apply Guests supply the beer. For more information contact Doc m2001@rogers.com

Camp Wangoma Reunion at Cedar Ridge Camp – 2 ½ days of FUN!

Friday October 15, 2021 – Sunday October 17, 2021

\$160.00

This includes the following:

Supper Friday night

Breakfast, Lunch & BBQ steak dinner Saturday

Breakfast Sunday

Two nights accommodation and the use of all the facilities

RSVP and information contact Doc m2001@rogers.com

Saying

"The greatest use of life is to spend it on something that outlasts it." William H. Danforth 1945.

Humour

What do you call a cow with no legs? Ground Beef

Who looks after the school when the students are on holidays? The Ruler

What do you get when you cross a goat with an owl? Hooten Nanney

These jokes are taken from the book "Jokes for Kids by Kids"

They Never Taught Us This In, School

"Backlog"

In the days when matches were not available, starting the fire was a difficult chore. With wood plentiful it was easier to keep the fire going all the time than it was to try and relight it each day. Dry wood was consumed quickly but a large green log at the back of the fireplace would smoulder for days and yield live embers each morning for lighting a new fire. Hence a reserve of any kind became know as a "backlog".

A SHORT HISTORY OF McARTHUR'S MILLS

By Mrs. Marjorie Slater (wife of Frank Slater who owned Slater's General Store)

Now Cunningham's General Store in McArthur's Mills

Historical Research Convenor of the McArthur's Mills Women's Institute

Sometime prior to the year 1880 a Scottish brass band leader and dancing teacher named Archie McArthur accompanied a group of men on a political tour of these then sparsely settled areas. At that time one family had settled in Hartsmere, one near old Herman and several at Fort Stewart and Boulter. There were no white settlers in the vicinity of what is now McArthurs Mills.

Coming by way of canoe to Norway Bay, they picked their way along blazed trails to visit the various families. Mr. McArthur, struck by the towering forest of virgin pine and the roaring river and waterfall, vowed to return and establish a mill on the promising looking site.

We returned shortly to find an Indigenous person named White Duck living under an upturned pine root near the rapids. A deal was made, Mr. McArthur purchased the mill site and water rights and true to his promise soon stood by the falls. The mills afforded

comfortable living quarters above for the family and a mill beneath. Could we now see the first water wheel (constructed principally of wood, we would indeed count it a primitive affair). The saw was what is known now as an "up and down" saw. At that time there were no roads, no bridge spanned the river. Two stringers afforded passage for those on foot and horses swam the river. Goods and supplies came by canoe and were packed on their back from Norway Bay. Thump lines were extensively used in those days as much larger loads could be carried with them.

Settlers were few but more settlers soon began to arrive. The only school in the then united townships of Mayo and Carlow was the Boundary School. In 1895 that the ratepayers met to discuss the erection of a school.

In 1896 was built at a cost of \$300.00. It was 26 feet long, 24 feet wide and 13 feet high. It was lathed and plastered, had a brick chimney, wainscoting four feet high, a shingled cottage roof and a pine floor. This same building served as a school until 1928 when it was razed by fire.

The first sixteen school desks were purchased for \$46.83 from Young Bros. and were shipped to Rathburn Station (now called Ormsby). They were brought by wagon a distance of 35 miles.

In 1901 A.A. Harvie was authorized to erect a flagpole 30 feet high (perfectly straight) and a flag was ordered 6 ft. by 3 ft. In the same year a hand bell numeral frame and slate for a blackboard were purchased. An organ was bought with concert funds. The first teacher, Mary Wadsworth, was paid \$25.00 a month. The ratepayers took pride in the school, and their first minutes included a request to the teacher to warn the children against cutting or marking the building.

As more settlers were brought in a store and Post Office were established and McArthur's Mills became the official name of the settlement. The well, equipped mill manufactured shingles and lumber. A cabinet maker plied his trade in the Barracks and soon every home was supplied with handsome chests, wash stands and various articles of furniture, some of which are still in existence to bear testimony of Jimmy Tufts handiwork. A blacksmith shop and then a cheese factory came into being and a telephone line spanned the township. Doctors were scarce but Mrs. Robert Harvie efficiently acted as midwife and three quarters of the passed population were ushered into the world by her. Raglan Cheese and Butter Company opened with J.R. Ballard of Madoc as the cheese maker. Many of the population were of the Presbyterian faith and later a church was erected at Hermon as it was considered a more central spot for church goers.

The first team of horses and lynch-pin wagon in the township were brought up from Almonte in the winter by Mr. McArthur. The first house to be built was on the property now owned by Maitland Barker. Prior to this a scoop roofed log shanty sufficed. Later other houses were built close by Archie McArthur Jr.

The settlers were industrious and happy. Picnic day was a gala marked by the erection of wooden baskets and swings very similar to those seen at our present day, midways and fairs. Community spirit was good. Building bees were in order. Square dancing a favourite pastime.

Reflections

In 1967 a Wangoma Staff member Wink (Greg Downs) had a girlfriend whose nickname was Honey. She sent him a container of honey as a care package to Camp. Unfortunately, the lid to the container of honey came off in the Post Office in Slater's store in McArthur's Mills. Communication between Slater's store and the Camp was a little sticky for awhile.

Alf Grigg – Camp Wangoma Staff – 1964 -1971

In 1970 a cabin group from Camp Walden decided to skinny dip in the rapids at McArthur's Mills. The Slaters claimed they owned the land under the water and the cabin group was trespassing on their land inappropriately.

Alf Grigg – Camp Wangoma Staff – 1964 - 1971

Peter and Ann Slater (son and daughter of Bill and Ann Slater. Bill was the son of Frank and Marjorie Slater) came to camp during lunch time in 1966 and 1967 for swimming lessons with Norrie Wilson. The extra money from the swimming lessons went towards a new piece of equipment for the waterfront.

Alf Grigg – Camp Wangoma Staff – 1964 -1971

If you know of any former staff member or camper and they would like to be on the mailing list to receive a copy of "Wangomatters – 50 Years Later – Before the Memories Fade", please get them to send me their email address.

The next edition we will be looking at how the Camp started – Sunfish Camp on the Toronto Islands.

WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER

Before the Memories Fade

Third Edition

September 2021

Welcome to the Third Edition of WANGOMATTERS! Since the First Edition, it has been amazing the comments, feedback and resources you have shared with me, Thank You! There is a saying “The more you give the more you get!” If you know of some former Camp Wangoma Staff or Campers who would like to be on the email mailing list just send me their name and email address and I will add them to the list.

8/9th Annual Camp Wangoma Invitational Golf Tournament – Friday October 15, 2021 – Bancroft Ridge Golf Course (18 holes) 30 Nicklaus Drive, Bancroft (613) 332-4653 - \$56.00 (inc. cart)

Tee times start at 12:00 Noon

Winner receives “Wangoma Plaque” and his/her name of the LARGE PLAQUE on permanent display in the Cedar Ridge Camp dining hall. Plus, MANY fabulous prizes worth money.

For more information and to register – contact Doc m2001@rogers.com

Camp Wangoma Reunion @ Cedar Ridge Camp – 2 ½ days FUN – Friday October 15, 2021 to Sunday October 17, 2021. Cost \$160.00 (CDN)

This includes the following:

- Supper- Friday night
- Breakfast, Lunch & BBQ steak dinner – Saturday
- Breakfast – Sunday

Two nights accommodation and the use of all the facilities

RSVP to register contact Doc m2001@rogers.com

Saying

“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.” Aesop

Humor

What’s the difference between a bad golfer and a bad skydiver?

A bad Golfer goes Whack, Dam!

A bad Skydiver goes Dam! Whack

What do you call cheese that isn’t yours?

Nacho Cheese!

How do crazy people go through the forest?

They take the Psycho Path!

They Never Taught Us This in, School

Mind Your “P’s” and “Q’s”:

Often tavern keepers kept records for payment of the amount consumed by customers by listing under the customer’s name, “P” for a pint of ale and “Q” for a quart. When the list began to grow the inn-keeper would suggest it was time to pay the tab by telling the drinker to “mind his “P’s” and “Q’s”. The lowercase letters “p” and “q” from the printer font could easily be confused when setting type, as each piece of type is set backwards and upside down. The printer would take care to “mind his ‘p’s’ and ‘q’s”.

Today of course, “to mind your ‘p’s and ‘q’s” means to look after your own business promptly with care and discretion.

Reference: What is It? Phrases – Lorraine O’Byrne – A Gallery of Historic Phrases

Camp Wangoma History – Where it All Began!

SUNFISH CAMP - SUNFISH ISLAND – TORONTO

In 1919 Toronto City council decided a camp should be made available for underprivileged employed boys from 9 to 16 years of age. The creation of this camp was given to a group of business men representing the Danforth – East YMCA to make the necessary arrangements. On July 7th 1919, with the assistance of the Rotary Club, the camp opened on Sunfish Island, a small island in the group of islands off Toronto’s waterfront near Ward’s Island. In the first summer, 24 boys attended the new camp where everything was in perfect order. The number of boys grew to over 48 by the time the camp was threatened by talk during the 1930s about building an airport on Hanlan’s Point Island.

SUNFISH CAMP THIRD SEASON 1921

JUNE 24th

SEPT. 5th

IDEAL CONDITIONS

WHOLESOME FUN

COMPETENT SUPERVISION

HEALTHY LIVING

TRAINED LEADERS

GOOD PALS

A PRIVILEGE FOR ANY WORKING BOY

A camp to meet the Physical & Social needs of Employed Boys

Situated across Toronto Bay, near Ward's Island

Boat arrangements made for boys who must be in the city of work at 7:00 o' clock

SUNFISH CAMP

Sunfish Camp was first organized in 1919 by Mr. Laurence Murray who goes to Camp Pine Crest this summer for his second season as Business Administrator. The success of the camp during the first season led to a forward step in 1920, and under the supervision of Norelle E. Luck, Community Boys Work Secretary at Central YMCA, 125 different boys enjoyed the privileges which this camp afforded during a period of nine weeks. Boys from factory, office store and warehouse live together on Sunfish Island (now Algonquin Island) and surroundings offering all the attractions of a camp many miles from Toronto. During the day, work in the city may demand a white collar, and a good suit of clothes or perhaps a soft collar and suit of overalls. It does not matter. That is all forgotten as soon as boys arrive at Sunfish. Business clothes are exchanged for camp togs and camp life is something real for the rest of the day. Dinner is served at night, a meal of good wholesome food and prepared by a first class cook. Baseball, athletics and the war canoes provide a program for the early parts of the evening. A good old swim follows, and lots of fun at the spring board and diving ladder for every boy who can swim. Soon the camp fire is lit and all the fellows gather within the camp fire circle in the glow of the crackling fire. The camp fire program is a big part of the night's fun. First a jolly sing-song and then a concert program or a talk by someone boys like to listen. Special events and corn roasts are not forgotten, and camp fire elections every two weeks mean a great night. Every Sunfisher crawls into his blankets at the close of day, tired and happy, full of joy of living, and next morning, after breakfast is ready for a full day's work.

SEASON 1921

The camp this year, again under the same direct supervision as last season, and continuing for ten weeks from Saturday June 25th to Saturday September 3rd, will be conducted in five – two, week periods. The three city branches of the YMCA are cooperating this year in the promotion of the camp and a representation community of Community Work leaders and laymen will give supervision to the camp in respect to matters general policy. Any employed boy 14 -17 years of age is eligible for the camp with respect to matters – general policy.

PROGRAMME

Baseball, Athletics, Swimming, War Canoe Trips, Camp Fires, Sing Songs, Treasure Hunts, Corn Roasts, Concerts, Sunday Services, Inspirational and Practical Talks Camp Elections, Stunt Nights and the "The Sunfish Net."

All swimming under supervision, and special instructions will be given to boys who wish to learn

CAMP LEADERS

All leaders assisting in the program of the camp are experienced men, having had former training in work with boys.

FEE

The rate will be \$4.00 a week for tent accommodation, breakfast and evening dinner on week days, and three meals on Sunday. Fees for any fraction of a week will be at the rate of 60 cents a day. Single meal 25 cents.

EQUIPMENT

One pair of grey wool blankets, bed and mattress, will be provided for each camper.

REGISTRATION

All applications for accommodation will be made on forms which may be secured from the Boy's Department at Central, West End or Broadview YMCA, the Big Brother Movement 90 Albert Street and at the office of the Toronto Boy Life Council, 87 King St. East. Applications filled out, duly signed and accompanied by a registration fee of one dollar, which will be applied on camp fees, will be received at any of these offices.

Camp Committee

Geo. Hambly, Chairman

E. M. Dillon

W. T. Gregory

Arthur Fowler

A. M. Kenndy

Camp Director

Assistant Director

Norville E. Luck

J.E. Shortt

Central YMCA

West End YMCA

Hanlan's Point had many cottages that had to be removed for the construction of a new airport (which became later known as the Billy Bishop Airport). The solution was to move the cottages to Sunfish Island, renaming the island Algonquin Island and displacing the Sunfish Island boy's camp. The only option to keep the camp in operation was to move the camp off the island, but to where?

References:

Innisfil Historical Society – Article on Sunfish Camp

City of Toronto Central Library – Archive Section – where you have to put white gloves on to read the article.

Reflections of being at Camp Wangoma

I always remember from Camp the phrase “Keep your forks for dessert” So, when I am lying in my coffin, I want to lie there with a fork in my hand. I want to be ready for the good things to come!
Alf Grigg – Camp Wangoma Staff – 1964 -1971

I remember Dave Blake wrapping a towel around his head like a turban and portaging a canoe with the middle thwart on his head!
Alf Grigg – Camp Wangoma Staff – 1964 - 1971

I remember putting on my zebra color coat of tails and driving as a chauffeur for George Rodgers to pick-up the CITS at Bark Lake. We had a lot of class, well maybe not first class, second or?
Alf Grigg – Camp Wangoma Staff – 1964 - 1971

If you have a reflection(s) of being at Camp Wangoma and would like to share, please send me an email.

Until next time – Be well! Have a 110% day! Live your dreams!

WANGOMATTER – 50 YEARS LATER
Before the Memories Fade
Fourth Edition

October 2021

Welcome to the Fourth Edition of WANGOMATTERS! We have gone from the First Edition of sending out to 35 email addresses for WANGOMATTERS to 75 email addresses for the newsletter. If you know of some former Camp Wangoma Staff and Campers who would like to be on the mailing list just send me their name and email address and I will add them to the list.

BIG THANK YOU TO DOC on behalf of the Camp Wangoma Alumni for organizing the Annual Camp Wangoma Invitational Golf Tournament and Camp Wangoma Reunion @ Cedar Ridge Camp.

Rob Cook was the winner of the Camp Wangoma Plaque this year! Congratulations Rob! The Camp Reunion was a great success! A fun, socializing time was had by all in attendance! Special thanks to Grayson Burke Camp Director of Cedar Ridge Camp and his staff Chutz, Mike and Stu for being great hosts!

Would you like to look at 740 pictures of Camp Wangoma? Checkout the following link.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/camp_wangoma_alumni/albums

This album was put together by Tim Clarke, which was professionally done! **BIG THANK YOU TO TIM** on behalf of the Camp Wangoma Alumni. Tim will be starting a new album. If you have pictures of Camp Wangoma you would love to share, send them to the following email address. Timclarke1829@gmail.com

SAYING

“Play is vital to all humanity. It is the finest system of education known to people.”
Neville Scarge

HUMOUR

Signs of Admiration

Plumber’s Truck: – “Don’t sleep with a drip. Call your plumber”.

Electrician’s Truck: - “Let us remove your shorts”.

Radiator Shop: - “Best place in town to take a leak.”

Muffler Shop: - “No appointment necessary. We hear you coming.”

Veterinarian’s Waiting Room: - “Be back in 5 minutes. Sit! Stay!”

Shop Repair Shop: - “We will heel you. We will save your sole. We will even dye for you.”

THEY NEVER TAUGHT US THIS IN SCHOOL

If only I knew about Playing Cards when I was at camp that I know today!

The Chinese invented playing cards in AD 1000. Some interesting facts and observations about playing cards:

Did you know that the traditional deck of playing cards is a striking coherent form of a calendar?

There are 52 weeks in a year and there are 52 playing cards in a deck.

There are 13 weeks in each season and there are 13 playing cards in each suit.

There are 4 seasons in a year and 4 suits in the deck.

There are 12 months in a year so there are 12 court cards (Those with faces namely, Jack, Queen, King in each suit).

The red cards represent day, while the black cards represent the night.

If you let Jacks = 11, Queens = 12 and Kings = 13, then add up all the sums of $1+2+3+\dots$ to $13 = 91$. Multiply this by 4, for the 4 suits, therefore $91 \times 4 = 364$, add 1 that is the Joker and you will arrive at the number 365 being the days in a year.

Is that a mere coincidence or a greater intelligence?

Of interest is the sum of the letters in the names of the cards eg. Add up the letters in one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, Jack, Queen, King and they come to 52!

The Spades indicate plowing or working.

The Heart indicates love thy crops.

The Clubs indicated flourishing and growth.

The Diamonds indicate reaping the wealth.

There is a deeper philosophy than just playing cards.

The mathematical perfection is mind blowing.

The following article was researched and documented by Brian Saracini. **BIG THANK YOU!**

If it wasn't for Brian, we would never have found out about Camp Woapak the overnight camp run by East York Y in between Sunfish Camp closing in 1954 and Camp Wangoma starting in

Sunfish Camp – Lake Simcoe

In 1925 William John Goodfellow brought the south half of lot 26 and 27 in the 9th concession of Innisfil Township for its woodlot. Much of the land was swamp and not suited to farming. With growing and profitable cottage industry on the east side of Lake Simcoe. William John decided to get into the cottage industry and subdivided a parcel of land along the waterfront of lot 27. This was accomplished in 1933 when the YMCA found this a perfect spot to relocate the Sunfish Island YMCA Camp. The YMCA purchased the north 30 acres of Williams property, an access road to service these cottages and connect the YMCA camp when he passed away shortly after on January 2, 1934.

With no completed road the YMCA resorted to unloading material at the east end of the 9th line and transporting building material in by lake. The YMCA completed the road, whereupon the new Sunfish Camp re-opened in 1935 with 48 boys.

VETS COME BACK TO HELP RUN SUMMER CAMP
The Globe and Mail (1936 - Current – August 2, 1946
Historical Newspapers, The Globe & Mail page 3

Vets Come Back to Help Run Summer “Y” Camp

Lake Simcoe August 1 (Staff)

Largest of the YMCA summer camps operated from Toronto Sunfish Camp on clear Lake Simcoe has an enviable esprit de corps both in its present campers and in its “alumni.” Newest feature of the camp is V.E. Lodge, set aside especially for returned veteran of the armed services who have served as leaders at Sunfish Camp.

William O Bell, camp director has caught on splendidly with the returned veteran leaders, and already 25 of the 104 leaders who joined the forces have enjoyed the full facilities of the camp and the loge is booked solidly for the remainder of the summer.

“My association with the boys who joined up has been the brightest spot in the eleven years the camp has been at Lake Simcoe.” Mr. Bell said “We kept in touch with all of them throughout the war years, sent them parcels and newsletter telling them where their pals were and what they were doing.

The camp was built by those boys.”

Started in 1919, by Danforth-East York YMCA at what is now Algonquin Island in Toronto Bay. Sunfish Camp moved to Lake Simcoe in 1935 with an enrolment of 48 boys. Since that time, it has grown from a handful of huts to a total of 33 buildings, including spacious dining room and recreation room, boat house and cabins. A total of 500 Toronto Youths between 8 and 14 years old spend their vacation here, many of them staying 8 weeks.

Special Swimming Lessons

The accent is on swimming and watersports at Sunfish, but from 7:30 AM until “lights out,” there is activity of all kinds in larger portions. A ceremonial flag raising is followed by a short, sharp session of P.T., a quick dip and breakfast. Cabin clean-up and inspection leads to a daily honor award and guarantees spink and span quarters. Handicrafts, including leather work, model aircraft building and making archery equipment, nature study groups and group games fill in most mornings.

Campers who can’t swim skip the handicraft periods and receive special swimming instruction from competent leaders, until they can pass a fifty foot swim test. The entire camp swims again an hour before noon.

Boat trips to near-by beaches and islands, campus games, paper chases, treasure hunts, and Indigenous lore, along with inner-cabin basketball, softball and tennis games fill the afternoons. Twenty-seven boats including war canoes, freighters, kayaks, rowboats dinghies and canoes, made the entire camp personnel waterborne on the boat trips. The camp competed in regattas in Barrie and around the lake winning many trophies

In 1948 a stone monument was built to hold 2 plaques, one in honour of the camps original supporter William Giles and one to recognize the works who built the camp. The plaques were inexplicably removed but the stone monument still stands in front of the old hospital building, now a cottage at 2519 Leonard Street.

The activities were not without incident. In August 1954 a group of seven went on a boat trip up to the Couchiching locks north of Washago. On the return trip, the boat capsized leaving the only option of trying to swim to shore, two miles away. When they did not return in the anticipated time, they were feared drowned but they were all found safe on Georgina Island.

The Sunfish Camp in Innisfil was a great success but as subsequent years saw an influx of cottagers, the area became too congested for a large boy's camp. The YMCA ultimately decided to sell the camp and look for a more remote location for a camp. On June 6th, 1955 the camp property was bought by George and Rose Burton and the YMCA relocated the boy's camp to the Kawarthas. George built a resort called "Holiday Acres." He eventually turned the property into 36 building lots.

All that remains of Sunfish Camp and Holiday Acres is "Holiday Beach" and a stone monument without a plaque.

Reference: Innisfil Historical Society.

Brian Saracini – Camper Camp Norval, Camper Sunfish Camp, Staff Camp Woopak, Staff Camp Wangoma

There is no doubt my eight complete summers at Sunfish Camp as integral in establishing character. With the transition in campers every two weeks my enthusiasm to meet and greet old friends, broadening my desire to discover the intricacies and trails of vast number of cultures that I pursue to this day.

Regretfully the names and faces of the many contacts I have faded with the activities of the years from seven through sixteen are still vibrant. An example, my first year at De La Salle I joined the bugle band and the following summer I played Reville each morning and Taps, each night.

I learned to sail at Sunfish Camp. In my twenties I built a canoe and then in the 90s moved up to a Hunter thirty-seven sailing the coast of Florida.

My life foundation began in camping and today at eighty a continuation of events embedded beginning at my first Y experience at YMCA Camp Norval.

Interview Rich Bailey – Camp Sunfish Staff, Camp Wangoma first Waterfront Director and Program Director – May 8, 2019

YMCA Camp Sunfish had Camp Pins.

They had a Camp basketball team with Orange and Maroon Shirts that played Barrie Y.

In the fifties there were three dance halls in the area and each staff had a summer girlfriend.

Four Sunfish Camp Staff were taken by Ivan Robinson for the first year at Camp Wangoma.

Rod Gleason was Assistant Camp Director for the last years of Camp Sunfish.

Brian Adamson – attended Sunfish Camp when he was 11 and 12 years old. One of the first Camp Wangoma Counsellor Staff.

A couple of many sponsors for Sunfish Camp – Honest Eds and Eatons.

During the Second World War there was no charge for those in military service to send their kids to Sunfish Camp.

REFLECTIONS ON BEING AT CAMP WANGOMA

Mark Suckling was a camper in the Adventure Section in the 50s at Camp. He remembers the whole section on an out trip having an overnight in a large Bell Tent.

Also, he remembers his Counsellor Klaus Kausbaum who became Nick St. Nickolis with the band Steppen Wolf in 1961.

Carl Sills a camper remembers winning the around the island swim when he was 12 years old.

WANGOMATTER – 50 YEARS LATER
Before the Memories Fade
Fifth Edition

November 2021

Welcome to the Fifth Edition of WANGOMATTERS! We have gone from the First Edition of sending out to 35 email addresses for WANGOMATTERS to 75 email addresses for the newsletter. If you know of some former Camp Wangoma Staff and Campers who would like to be on the mailing list just send me their name and email address and I will add them to the list.

I am looking for contributors to share their highlight(s) of Camp Wangoma for the Heading REFLECTIONS for the upcoming Editions of WANGOMATTERS 50 YEARS LATER. Send me an email with your highlight(s), if you would like to share. I will make sure it gets published in one of the upcoming Editions.

BIG THANK YOU TO BRIAN SARACINI for sharing his research and his camp experiences at Camp Woapak.

BIG THANK YOU TO BILL WILSON for sharing his two highlights at Camp Wangoma under REFLECTIONS with us.

Would you like to look at 18 pictures of Camp Wangoma Alumni Reunion Album 2021. Checkout the following link:

https://www.flickr.com/photos/camp_wangoma_alumni/albums

This album was put together by Tim Clarke. **BIG THANK YOU TO TIM** on behalf of the Camp Wangoma Alumni. If you have pictures of Camp Wangoma you would love to share, send them to the following email address. Timclarke1829@gmail.com

SAYING

“Play is vital to all humanity. It is the finest system of education known to people.”
Neville Scarge

HUMOUR

Signs of Admiration

Plumber’s Truck: – “Don’t sleep with a drip. Call your plumber”.

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THEY NEVER TAUGHT US THIS IN SCHOOL

Knocker – Up

A knocker – up was a profession in England and Ireland that started during and lasted well in the Industrial Revolution and at least as late as 1920s, before alarm clocks were affordable or reliable.

A knocker – up’s job was to rouse sleeping people, so they could get to work on time.

The knocker – up used a truncheon or short, heavy stick to knock on the client’s doors or a long and light stick, often made of bamboo, to reach windows or higher floors. At least one of them used a pee shooter. In return the knocker – up would be paid a few pence a week. The knock – up would not leave a client’s window until they were sure that the client had been awoken. Also, a knocker – upper would use a ‘snuffer outer’ as to tool to rouse the sleeping. The implement was used to put out gas lamps which were lit at dusk and then needed to be extinguished at dawn. There were large numbers of people carrying out the job, especially in large industrial towns such as Manchester.

Generally, the job was carried out by elderly men and women but sometimes police constables supplemented their pay by performing the task during early morning patrols.

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens includes a brief description of knock – up.

If it wasn’t for Brian, we would never have found out about Camp Woapak the overnight camp run by East York Y in between Sunfish Camp closing in 1954 and Camp Wangoma starting in 1956. It was located on Catchacoma Lake in the Kawarthas.

CAMP WOAPAK

My “Y” experience began in 1945 through Camp Norval, then Sunfish Camp in 1948 where I spent complete summers until the sale of the camp in 1954. In early 1955 I was contacted by the East York “Y” and offered a summer position at a new project in the Kawarthas. The position entailed the setup of operations in late spring and a continuing role in out tripping for the summer.

I was shocked to find there was no record: in fact, there was dissent as to the existence of Camp E. The camp was owned and operated by Bert Green and run by his semi-adopted sons Doug and Ron. One of my fondest memories was of an Olympic hopeful Tom Skimming who plied his trade pole vaulting early mornings on the beach. Tom obtained a BSc degree from the University of Michigan and a Post Graduate Studies in mineral exploration at McGill University spending the summer of 55 in training for the British Empire Games with dual role of councillor. Tom’s practice on the beach led him to a place on the Canadian team for the British Empire Games held a few years later in Vancouver.

Brian tried to reach out to Tom for more information. However, Tom now is in his late eighties was on an Antarctic Expedition.

Research led me to Jodie Aoki at Trent University Peterborough, who is sourcing their files discovered a brochure from the East York YMCA on Coxwell. The brochure was a preparation note to parents of boys attending Camp Woapak the coming summer.

YOUR SON IS GOING TO CAMP EAST YORK YMCA

This pamphlet is written to parents with the hope that it will help you, help your son have a good time at camp. The suggestions and comments inside this cover have been made on the basis of a good number of years of experience in the YMCA Camping and Boy's work, so we ask you to read them carefully. You will be paving the way for your boy to have the best holiday ever!!

CAMP WOAPAK
EAST YORK YMCA
900 COXWELL AVENUE

(a) Food Parcels

We ask you to carefully consider this matter of sending food parcels to your son for the following reasons:

- 1) The upset a boy's normal meal schedule
- 2) Candy, cakes and cookies should be avoided.

(b) Chapel Service

An interdenominational Chapel Service is held at Camp every Sunday Morning. Arrangements will be made to transport Roman Catholic campers to mass.

(c) Letter Writing

Cheerful, encouraging letters from home aid tremendously in helping your camper adjust to his new home away from home. Avoid mentioning how much you miss him: how much his pet misses him etc. Try to keep your letter on the bright side.

(d) Comic Books

Comic books tend to keep a boy from participating in out-of-door camp activities. In many cases they present an "easy out" for a boy who could be enjoying more active, healthy camp programs. The camp suggests that comic books should not be taken or sent to camp.

(e) When in camp make yourself known to your boy's Cabin Counsellor.

The River Trip

Camp Woapak was strategically located with extensive waterways conducive to short and long range (tenday trips). During one of our early conversations Ivan implied a desire for a unique trip in the second month. Two brothers, sons of the owners of a local mining company where councillors that year and had considerable local knowledge playing part of our planning. At the base of the lake was a river with no record of it being traversed in many decades. It should be noted the year was 1955, and there was very little habitation in the area. In goggling the area there is now a dam at the mouth of the river that was previous set of rapids. Due to a break in the waterway the trip was divided into three sections. The first down the Mississauga River through Buckhorn into Stoney Lake then to the

highway south of Haultain, a distance of approximately 31 miles. We were met and travelled by truck to Long Lake, through Loukes Lake, Cox Lake to Gold Lake home to Catchacoma Lake and adding another 11 and a half miles to the trip.

Today the trip would be more difficult as a view of earth displays parts of the waterway between Long Lake and Gold Lake as either dry or marshy area.

The Kawarthas is a vast collection of lakes and waterways, at the time 1955, there was little or no signs of habitation. Haliburton was mostly forest ranger towers high on a hill offering a vast panorama of surrounding waterways. Moose and deer were the only sign of wildlife. We learnt to live off the land, blueberries and frogs legs our favourite food.

Our trip down the Mississauga River is an example of wilderness camping. It had not been transverse in over a hundred years. At 16 years I had no concept of what that summer would play in my life. In the late sixties as publisher of the Mississauga News I spearheaded a group in a plebiscite to name the town of Mississauga. I have a continue relationship with the Mississauga tribe of Curve Lake and have contact off and on with three tribal chiefs since 1967.

If the "Y" required an example of positive influence in their moulding of youth I am your poster boy. For over 60 years I have utilized their energies, shared their philosophies and expounded on YMCA values in a variety of manners. Even my retirement residence and local was predicated on those eleven summers of education.

Brian Saracini – Camper Camp Norval, Camper Sunfish Camp, Staff Camp Woapak, Staff Camp Wangoma

REFLECTIONS ON BEING AT CAMP WANGOMA

Bill Wilson one of his two highlights at camp was winning the around the island swim in 1973.

Unfortunately, Bill never knew if his name got placed on the plaque in the dining hall. The plaque disappeared as Camp Wangoma closed the end of that year for campers.

The second of Bill's highlights was finding a hidden collection of Playboy magazines in the hollow of a large log off the foot path past Pioneer Village. I grabbed one magazine, ran back to show it to my cabin mates. Wow, how exciting for a bunch of 13 year old boys.

We all returned some time later (maybe the next day) to the log and to our disappointment, the other magazines were gone. I returned the one that I had taken, I was terrified a staff member would catch us and call my parents.

The summer of 1968 Yo-Yos were a craze at camp. I mean the Yo-Yos that go up and down with a string. The craze died down when too many staff were going to see the nurse with Yo-Yo tois of the Yo-Yo finger.

WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER
Before the Memories Fade
Sixth Edition

December 2021

Welcome to the Sixth Edition of WANGOMATTERS! Thank you everyone for your support of the Six Editions of “WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEAR LATER – Before the Memories Fade!”

I would like to wish everyone MERRY CHRISTMAS AND BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY, HEALTHY, SAFE AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR 2022!

If you know of some former Camp Wangoma Staff and Campers who would like to be on the mailing list just send me their name and email address and I will add them to the list. I am looking for contributors to share their highlight(s) of Camp Wangoma for the Heading REFLECTIONS for the upcoming Editions of WANGOMATTERS 50 YEARS LATER. Send me an email with your highlight(s), if you would like to share. I will make sure it gets published in one of the upcoming Editions.

CONGRATULATION TO THE ROCK (Ron Richan) on becoming a grandfather to Levi Richan LaBlanc.

BIG THANK YOU TO BILL THORSTEINSON for sharing the article “The \$5,000.00 and the Cemetery. Sharing his reflection on Butch

BIG THANK YOU TO BRIAN SARACINI for sharing his information on the first year of Camp Wangoma

BIG THANK YOU TO RICH BAILEY for sharing his information on the first year of Camp Wangoma

BIG THANK YOU TO MURRAY POPE for sharing his reflection on the Camp Reunion 1965.

SAYING

“Like snowflakes, my Christmas memories gather and dance – each beautiful, unique and gone too soon.” Anon

HUMOUR

What do you call Santa Claus with unfolded clothes?

Kris Wrinkle!

What do you call Santa (Claus) on the beach?

Sandy Claus!

What do you call Santa with no money?

Saint “Nickel” less.

THEY NEVER TAUGHT US THIS IN SCHOOL**The Tradition of the Christmas Pickle**

It's Christmas, a time of jingle bells, stockings, presents under the tree and family traditions. Celebrate the holidays with a time-honoured, German tradition and have fun with your family for years to come. Following an old, world custom, parents waited until Christmas Eve to hide a small pickle ornament on the Christmas tree tucking it out of sight among the branches. On Christmas morning, the first family member to spot the pickle was rewarded with a special blessing for the coming year and received the first present from under the tree. Anon.

The following essay was written by Bill Thorsteinson Camp Director of Camp Wangoma 1961 – 1963.

The \$5,000 and the Cemetery

Sunfish Camp had to move. The Camp Committee began to look for a new campsite. One weekend they visited a site off Hartsmere Rd., east of Bancroft, west of Lake Weslemakoon. They were impressed and made up their minds right away. So as not to miss out, one of the Committee wrote a personal cheque for \$5,000 as a deposit.

Owen Smith was the Financial Officer for the Toronto Y. The Camp Committee was part of the East York Branch and their funds were controlled by Head Office. So, when Owen came to work Monday morning there was a gentleman waiting for him. "What can I do for you?" Owen asked. "Well, I'd like a reimbursement for a personal cheque I wrote for \$5,000 as a deposit on a camp site to replace Sunfish Camp." the gentleman replied. This shocked Owen. Here was a committee member committing the YMCA for five grand with no approval and no knowledge on the part Headquarters that folks were out looking for sites, no less, putting deposits down. The YMCA did not work this way!

Well to make a long story short the gentleman got his \$5,000 and East York Y got Camp Wangoma. I think the camp was pretty well like it is as we remember it, except for the Dining Hall which was designed and built under the supervision of one of the East York Board members Harold Witmer. I suspect the Swim Dock was added as well, but I'm not sure.

The YMCA Lawyer, of course, had to review the contract. He came upon something that quite startled him. Not only did the YMCA own the camp site it also owned the adjacent Cemetery and Parking Lot. The very Cemetery where Ray and Orpha Loney and Raymond Lott (Orpha's brother) and many other locals reside. This was also quite a surprise to Mrs. Bert Barker who was the local Chairperson of the Cemetery Board. What to do?

It might seem quite simple to just give the local community both the Cemetery and Parking Lot. Well, nothing is ever simple. The YMCA has to obtain a Quit Claim Deed in favour of the Cemetery Board. The process was started right away. Ivan was Camp Director for four years and I followed him. What with YMCA Lawyers, Cemetery Board Lawyers, Township Lawyers and God knows who else. It took a while. I was in my third year at Director when I finally got to deliver the Quit Claim Deed to Mrs. Barker.

The Deed transferred the Cemetery and Parking Lot to the Cemetery Board until such time as the Cemetery was full. At this point the Cemetery belonged to the community, but the Parking Lot reverted to the YMCA.

I had the opportunity to have coffee with Rich Bailey May 8, 2019 the first waterfront director of Camp Wangoma.

He mentioned Ivan Robinson the first camp director of Camp Wangoma used the principles of Dimock/Thorsen to develop the camp philosophy which was group centre for the cabin group to make decisions. Cabin groups had the option of buying into the whole Camp Activities. Four former Camp Sunfish staff were invited by Ivan to be on staff the first year at Camp Wangoma.

The old lodge was used as a dining hall.

Assistant Camp Director named Gus hid his beer in the ice house until campers discover his beer was there.

Brian Sarancini sent me his memories of Camp Wangoma October 13, 2015. He was a first year, staff at Camp Wangoma taking out, out-trips.

The following spring of 1956, I was contacted by the YMCA and advised Woapak had been closed in favour of a new location on Lake Wannamaker 20 miles south of Bancroft with the new name Camp Wangoma under the auspices of camp director Ivan Robinson. Again, we set up tent platforms for the first summer and I was advised my role for the summer would be mainly out-trips.

The first year the camp consisted of the main lodge for administration staff, the dining/meeting hall, two ice houses, director's cabin and two other small cabins. One of which I shared and a grouping of camper tent platforms north and west of the waterfront area. The only other building in use was the barn that was winter storage and was utilized in season as a craft center.

REFLECTIONS ON BEING AT CAMP WANGOMA

Murray Pope Pioneer Counsellor 1965 remembers the Camp Reunion in the fall at the King Edward Hotel in Toronto organized by Ted Nicoloff. There was an abundance of booze. But he remembers Zenn Andrusypshin being there and getting too drunk and fell on his drinking glass and cut his forehead. He went on to play football at UCLA and then played for the argonauts for several years. Murray is wondering if anyone else remembers that party?

Bill Thorsteinson Camp Director 1961 – 1963 remembers adopting a dog named Butch for his family. Unfortunately, Butch did not but workout. So, Bill took the dog to camp to give to Raymond Loney. Raymond took the dog hunting. Apparently, the dog corner a moose, but Butch did not workout for Raymond. Butch was never heard of again.

We thought Raymond had only one dog a beagle called Holly.

Banquet night Raymond used to bring Holly in the Dining Hall to sing while he played his harmonica.

**I remember the Christmas July 25, 1970 we celebrated at camp. Paul Long was Santa Claus and he sat on the ladders of the fire truck behind a parade of vehicles down to Langmedes and back to camp.
Alf Grigg – Camp Wangoma Staff – 1964 -1971**

WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER
Before the Memories Fade
Seventh Edition

January 2022

Welcome to the Seventh Edition of WANGOMATTERS! Thank you everyone for your support of the Seven Editions of “WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEAR LATER – Before the Memories Fade!”

I would like to wish everyone **BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY, HEALTHY, SAFE AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR 2022!** Another year and I realized the older I get, the more I have in common with computers. We both start out with lots of memory and drive, then we become outdated, crash unexpectedly and eventually have to have our parts replaced!

If you know of some former Camp Wangoma Staff and Campers who would like to be on the mailing list just send me their name and email address and I will add them to the list. I am looking for contributors to share their highlight(s) of Camp Wangoma for the Heading **REFLECTIONS** for the upcoming Editions of **WANGOMATTERS 50 YEARS LATER**. Send me an email with your highlight(s), if you would like to share. I will make sure it gets published in one of the upcoming Editions.

BRIAN SARACINI camper West End YMCA Camp Norval, Danforth East York YMCA Camp Sunfish, staff Camp Woapka and one of the first Counsellors Camp Wangoma passed away Tuesday December 14, 2021. If, it wasn't for Brian we would not have had information on Camp Wopaka.

BIG THANK YOU TO DOC (GARY BALLARD) who forward Brian's name and phone number to me in 2015. Brian wanted to share his experiences at Camp Norval, Camp Sunfish, Camp Woapka and Camp Wangoma. Brian and I had a great conversation about his experiences at the different camps and he sent me the information and research he did on Camp Woapka. Over the past years Doc kept in touch with Brian on a regular basis. When Brian was in the hospice on his final journey Doc made me aware of Brian's situation. I was able to get in touch with Brian by phone. We had a great conversation and I was able to thank him personally for his research and contribution towards the history of Camp Wangoma. Brian mentioned how much he appreciated Doc phoning him each day and keeping in touch with him. It made his days! Also, Brian's wife Sandy expressed her appreciation for Doc keeping in touch.

BIG THANK YOU TO TED CROUCH former Camp Wangoma Staff who sent me a link to two of his musical productions from Acoustic Avenue “Songs for a Winter Night” and “Fare Thee Well 2021” Variety of Songs by Canadian Musicians with a few International Musicians for the radio station in Salmon Arm British Columbia.

BIG THANK YOU TO DURL AND ELDON LOTT for this editions essay! “A Golden Opportunity” sharing information on the early days of Camp Wangoma in an interview July 29, 2016.

SAYING

“Coronavirus has turned us all into dogs. We wander around the house looking for food. We get told, “No” if we got too close to strangers; and we get really excited about going for walks and car rides.” MROO – Newsletter Fall 2021

HUMOUR

“LEXOPHILE” (I.E., WORD-LOVER) JOKES

To write with a broken pencil is pointless.

England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.

The girl said she recognize me from the Vegetarians Club, but I swear I have never met Herbivore.

I know a guy who drinks brake fluid, but says he can stop any time.

A thief who stole a calendar got twelve months.

A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail.

A will is a dead giveaway.

Police were summoned to a daycare centre where a three year, old was resisting a rest.

THEY NEVER TAUGHT US THIS IN SCHOOL

Us older people need to learn something new every day just to keep the gray matter tuned up.

Where did “Piss Poor” come from?

They used to use urine to tan animal skins, so families used to all pee in a pot.

And then once it was full it was taken and sold to the tannery.

If you had to do this to survive you were “Piss Poor.” But worse than that were the real poor folk who couldn’t even afford to buy a pot.

They “didn’t have a pot to piss in” and were the lowest of the low.

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn’t just how you like it, think about how things used to be.

The following essay was written after an Interview with Durl Lott a Counsellor/Section Director and Eldin Lott on maintenance in the early days of Camp Wangoma

A Golden Opportunity

Friday morning July 29, 2016 I had the Golden Opportunity to meet with Durl and Eldin Lott to share their memories about Camp Wangoma and the camp property.

Durl was three years old when his parents and family moved to the property that is now Cedar Ridge Camp and Eldin was born in the house on the property. Durl mentioned that before Eldin was born he was the youngest in the family with an older brother and sister. When the member of the family took Durl upstairs to one of the bedrooms in the house to see his new born brother, Durl mentioned he didn't need another brother, he already had a brother. However, when Durl's older brother came home from school, he told his older brother he was no longer his brother, he had a new brother. Behind the house was a great area to play in the sand. Also, a lot of snakes use to come to the sandy area. Durl remembers their dog a collie, standing in between him and the snakes to protect him.

The flag stone on the ground just outside the front of the Dining Hall was taken from the ridge behind the Frontier Section. Also, in the early years of camp a lot of flag stone was shipped to Toronto.

The big bell in front of the dining hall at camp that was used for camp emergencies was erected by Bob Coates and Eldin Lott in 1962. The cement has remained solid. Eldin mentioned the belt on the cement mixer broke so they got a tiller to power the cement mixer and they finished off the job. The big bell came from Fire Station number 53 in East York.

The cabin behind the dining hall that was the kitchen boy's cabin during Camp Wangoma days.

The cabin that was in front of the Dining Hall was used by the first Camp Director Ivan Robinson.

Ben Ivy was the owner of the property before Camp Wangoma. The Lotts looked after the property for Ben Ivy. When Ben Ivy decided to sell the property, it was offered to the Lott family for \$4,000.00. The land was cleared by hand saws, axes and horses. Ben Ivy ended up selling the property to the Pott's family who ran a resort Whispering Pines. The Pott's family sold the property to East York YMCA for Camp Wangoma.

The Pott's family lived in the middle of the old lodge. One side of the lodge was used as a dining room and the other side as a recreation room. Fred a grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Potts works as a manager of car repairs at the Canadian Tire in Bancroft today.

The CIT and Out Trip Cabin during Camp Wangoma is now the Craft Shop for Cedar Ridge Camp originally was an Ice House. For insulation they used saw dust. Ice was cut from Lake Wannamaker during the winter and stored in saw dust in the Ice House. The ice kept the perishable food during the warm weather as there was no electricity.

When Durl and Eldon lived on the property they used to clear a spot on the lake to play hockey during the winter. One time they had cleared the snow for an ice rink. The next day they came back and a local ice cutter had cut their ice rink into cubes of ice to store in the Ice House. They were not too happy.

The ten horse power motor and Peterborough Boat was given by Bob Coates to Camp Wangoma that was used for many years as a rescue boat for tipped canoes and sailboats.

A Few Memories

In the early years of Camp Wangoma Raymond Loney and Eldin Lott took out and brought back the out trips.

In the early years Eldin used to drive into Bancroft to pick-up 8 – 9 cans of milk twice a week.

*One of the special suppers in the early years of Camp Wangoma was a Plank Supper. (Round disks cut off logs of wood the size and shape of a dinner plate)
Durl mentioned he was at camp with a broken ankle and used to drive his Volks Wagon up and down the hill in the Adventurer Section to the dining hall.*

When Nature Land owned the property as a Trailer Camp there were 14 Trailers on site.

The Pioneer Section of Camp is seen as the side of springs and the Frontier Section is seen as ridges of rocks.

In the early years of Camp Wangoma behind the boathouse close to the Ice House was the Adventurer Section gathering spot for section camp fires.

The first barn on the property burnt down in 1944. The barn presently on the property is the second barn. Durl and Eldon related how the community came together to put up the barn. Northwest corner of the barn on the opposite side of the road you can find part of the foundation of the original Lott House. Also, on the northeast corner of the barn you can find part of the cement water trough for the animals. Fifteen yards northwest of the trough you find a big rock sitting top of a filled in well that had been dug and lined with stones by Frank Lott. Durl and Eldin's dad Frank Lott was well known in the community as an excellent person in digging and lining wells with rocks.

In the early days of Camp Wangoma there was an incinerator south of the barn for burning camp garbage.

Eldin related there was a ram with the sheep that was really nasty around people. One day his older brother was in the pen with the ram and the sheep, stepped aside and the ram butted his head into the cement wall at the bottom of the barn. They never had a problem with that ram again.

Frank Lott was involved in constructing the Frontier Cabins and building the six punts (row boats) during the early days of Camp Wangoma.

The snapping turtle that buries their eggs each year in the sand outside the main lodge was burying their eggs in the same spot during the early days of Camp Wangoma.

REFLECTIONS

Murray Pope Camp Wangoma Staff 1965 and I realized the Camp Staff get together at the King Edward Hotel was in the fall of 1965 not 1964 organized by Ted Nicoloff Camp Wangoma Staff.

Ted went to McGill University studying law. He ended up teaching in London England and Toronto. Also, he had a successful acting career.

He lived in the Beaches Community in a house on the west side of Adam Beck School. In the 90s he was elected a school trustee for the area. His son and daughter worked part-time for the City of Toronto Parks and Recreation. Ted passed away January 29, 2021.

Premier Robert Frost visited Camp Wangoma in 1958. He had a law office in Orillia and for many years he was on the board of directors for the Orillia Y. Apparently, he was really impressed with Camp Wangoma. Was anyone at Camp for this event?

Alf Grigg – Camp Wangoma Staff – 1964 - 1971

Brian Adamson was on Camp Wangoma Staff in the late 50s and early 60s. Also, he had been a camper at Sunfish Camp. “Brian Adamson is on the camp committee for Wangoma and his wife Janet have consented to look after a staff weekend for us the last weekend of October 1966. If any staff requires any letters for their girl friend’s parents or any additional information, please phone Bob Ward” (Wangoma Staff Council letter fall 1966.)

Brian and his wife Janet eventually owned Camp Gay Venture (Girl’s Camp) in Haliburton. Brian used to bring girls over from Camp for an out trip on the Circuit.

In the 60s the government was selling off Crown Land around Mayo Lake. Brian was able to purchase a cottage lot on Mayo Lake which he still owns today.

Brian has retired since from being a Dean at Seneca College.

Alf Grigg – Camp Wangoma Staff – 1964 - 1971

WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER
Before the Memories Fade
Eighth Edition

February 2022

Welcome to the Eighth Edition of WANGOMATTERS! Thank you everyone for your support of the past Editions of “WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEAR LATER – Before the Memories Fade!”

Cold weather is here. Had to scrape ice off my window screen this morning. Used my supermarket loyalty card. Only got 10% off.

If you know of some former Camp Wangoma Staff and Campers who would like to be on the mailing list just send me their name and email address and I will add them to the list. I am looking for contributors to share their highlight(s) of Camp Wangoma for the Heading REFLECTIONS for the upcoming Editions of WANGOMATTERS 50 YEARS LATER. Send me an email with your highlight(s), if you would like to share. I will make sure it gets published in one of the upcoming Editions.

In this Edition of WANGOMATTERS 50 YEARS LATER and the next two Editions I will be highlighting the seven Camp Directors of Camp Wangoma. As I present each Camp Director and you feel I have missed something please let me know and I will correct or add the information.

Also, please send me a memory or memories as I present each Director and I will include them in the next issue of “WANGOMATTERS”

BIG THANK YOU TO BILL THORSTEINSON – Camp Director Camp Wangoma 1961 – 1963 for taking time to have an Interview with me to share with me for this Edition’s Article.

BIG THANK YOU TO TED CROUCH – CIT, Junior Counsellor, Counsellor 1968 - 1971 - sharing the lyrics to the Camp Song he wrote in 1970 “Pull the Water” with a great introduction of why he wrote the song and how he was inspired by Paul Long and his Camp Song “We are the Boys from Wangoma”

BIG THANK TO MURRAY POPE – sharing his reflection about hitch hiking.

SAYING

“People will never know how far a little kindness can go. You may start a chain reaction.”

Rachel Joy Scott

HUMOUR

Confucious did not say!

Person, who runs in front of car gets tired, but person who runs behind car gets exhausted.

Person, who buys many prunes get good run for money.

Person, who leaps of cliff jumps to conclusion.

Person, who drives like hell is bound to get there.

Person, who stands on toilet is high on pot.

THEY NEVER TAUGHT US THIS IN SCHOOL

Us older people need to learn something new every day just to keep the gray matter tuned up.

Where did "The Graveyard shift" come from?

In the fifteenth century England was old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So, they would take the bones to the bone house and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they had been burying people alive. So, they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift) to listen for the bell, Thus, someone could "be saved by the bell" or was considered "a dead ringer."

Ivan Robinson Camp Director 1956 – 1960

By Alf Grigg

Ivan was the first Camp Director of Camp Wangoma. During the off season of summer camp, he was Program Secretary at the East York YMCA. He brought to Camp Wangoma a wide range of experience having been active on the staff of the Charlottetown P.E.I. Y. Cleveland YMCA, North Woods Camp on Lake Temagami, East York Y – Camp Sunfish and Camp Woapak.

Ivan served the Y as Boy's Work Secretary of the Charlottetown P.E.I. Association an assistant to the General Secretary of the Ignace Ontario YMCA. He had a Licentiate of Music from Acadia University and a Bachelor a Science Degree in Group Work Education from George Williams University in Chicago.

Ivan passed away in 2014. The Camp Wangoma Alumni at the time put together a plaque to honour Ivan hung on the east wall of the dining hall. Durl Lott and Alf Grigg made the

presentation of the plaque is 2015 during pre-camp for Cedar Ridge Camp Staff. The following tribute is on the plaque.

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Ivan Robinson -1926-2014
By Ontario Camps Association

Cedar Ridge Camp began as a camp for boys, Camp Wangoma, Operated by the Toronto East York Y.M.C.A. Ivan Robinson was the First Director of Camp Wangoma starting in 1956. He became Assistant Director of Y.M.C.A. Camp Pinecrest in 1961 and then Directed Pinecrest from 1963 to 1967.

In 1968 the Toronto Y.M.C.A. amalgamated the 4 Toronto based Y.M.C.A. camps and Ivan became the first Executive Director of the Toronto Y.M.C.A. Camping Services. After leaving the Y.M.C.A. Ivan Directed Bolton Camp for Toronto Family Services until his retirement.

Loved by all, Ivan Robinson was a glorious happy man. His warmth and enthusiasm filled every room he ever entered. His personality attracted and brought the best out of his Camp Wangoma Staff, yet he always had time to talk and provide comfort to an 8 year old boy away from home for the first time. All who knew Ivan remember his love of singing and playing the piano after dinner each night at camp.

Ivan was a Past President of the Ontario Camps Association and was a founding member of The Society of Camp Directors. A life of leading encouraging and mentoring campers and camp staff well lived. Ivan Robinson will be remembered fondly and with respect by all who knew him.

Bill Thorsteinson – Camp Director - 1961 - 1963

The following essay was written after an Interview with Bill Thorsteinson North York YMCA Friday March 10, 2017. Second Camp Director of Camp Wangoma 1961- 1963

Bill and I met on the Main Street of North York YMCA for this interview. It was great to see him again! When I started East York YMCA as a member in 1959 Bill was full-time staff.

We started the interview talking about Bob Coates. Bob had been on the Camp Committee at Sunfish Camp but never on staff. Also, Bob was a member of the Camp Wangoma Camp Committee and never on staff. Bob spent his holidays working at camp – what a contribution. While Bill was directing camp, he and his wife Joan, who was the camp nurse

lived in residence at the Camp Infirmary Mushkeekie not the Ivy Cottage. Bill thought the Ivy was too remote from the activities at the camp.

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During one pre camp Bill use to put up a blank template of a schedule for camp programs for all three sessions and asked the staff to fill in the blanks using their creativity and talents. The program for all three sessions was completed in half an hour.

One year during the off season, Bill asked his senior staff who would be the most qualified to work directly with campers. They all replied that they were the best for the job. That season Bill put the senior staff in cabins as counsellors and junior staff who were qualified fill the positions of Waterfront Director, Trip Director and so forth. The experiment worked extremely well.

Rainy days were treated with a positive attitude. Camp staff were encouraged to wear their brightest clothes to lighten the day. There was emphasis on "What You Can Do" instead of "What You Can't Do!" for example a hike in the rain. One of the most memorable rain day programs was turning the dining hall into Maple Leaf Gardens. Each camper was on a team and played floor hockey for the Stanley Cup.

Each morning there was morning dip and everyone in camp, except for me Bill said, went in for a refreshing dip. There were three sections in camp – Bantams 9 & 10, Juniors 12 to 14 and Seniors 14 and over.

The Bantams (Adventurers) went on overnight hikes to the open field behind the Junior Section (Pioneer). The Juniors (Pioneers) went on canoe trips to Lake Weslemakoon. The Seniors (Frontiers) went on extended canoe trips to Mazinaw and to Algonquin Park.

Two fond memories Bill has of camp. The first memory is of an all camp, campfire at the Ottawa Y's Camp On-Da-Da-Waks which took place on a platform on the water. All the campers were in boats, canoes, rowboats and sailboats all tethered together and towed by the camp power boat in a great circle around the platform. As the Camp Director was about to begin the campfire all that was heard was Ping! Ping! Ping! All the canoes, rowboats had broken away from the tethers and were drifting all over the water. Fortunately, all craft were hand paddled to shore and everyone was safe- except the Camp Director who was stranded on the platform – he may still be there.

The second memory was of Tom Raynor who got stranded on a two weeks canoe trip. The creek he was supposed to take his canoes down had dried up. Raymond Loney and Bob Coates finally found Tom, his Junior Counsellor and Campers having a great time at a Girl Guide Camp they had discovered. There was no hurry to be rescued.

Bill grew up in Ottawa and was involved with the Ottawa YMCA.

In 1957 Bill married Joan Herbet in Ottawa and they moved to Montreal.

They later moved to Brantford where both their sons were born.

They were both involved with YM/YWCA Camp Ruddy.

In 1961 Bill and his wife moved to Toronto.

Bill was Program Secretary with East York Y and directed Camp Wangoma.

After Directing Camp Wangoma – Bill ended up working with Adult Programs with the Y.

Later on, he got involved with the Ontario Recreation Association in administration.

Eventually, Bill got involved with a Consulting Company in Toronto Benchmark.
Bill is now retired and lives in Don Mills, Toronto, Ontario

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Camp Wangoma Song – Created by Paul Long – 1966

Paul was on staff in 1966, 1967 and 1969

Paul passed away February 11, 2017 in Perth, Ontario

**We are the boys from Wangoma,
We are the men of the portage trail,
We are the boys from Wangoma
And we shall never fail**

**Canoe red, paddle flashing,
Over lake and stream,
Future leaders of our nation follow the Pioneer Dreams**

**We are the boys from Wangoma,
We are the men of the portage trail,
We are the boys from Wangoma
And we shall never fail**

**Frontier/Pioneer/Voyageur too, parts of the valiant band,
Adventurers striving ever forward, spread our fame across the land,
In years to come when we look back with just and honest pride
Over the trails we have crossed our paddles by our side.**

**We are the boys from Wangoma,
We are the men of the portage trail,
We are the boys from Wangoma
And we shall never fail**

Introduction to "Pull the Water – 1970 – Ted Crouch

When I arrived at Camp Wangoma in 1968 as a Counsellor -In Training (C.I.T) I was introduced to "We are the Boys from Wangoma" a beautiful camp song compiled by Paul Long. As a guitarist, singer and budding teenage song writer I immediately started playing along and singing that song with Paul and the Boys. It was my first experience in such an environment and it was impressionable and inspirational.

During my first summer at Wangoma we had experiences that were life changing and have lasted a lifetime. One of those was getting to know each of the divisions or groups at the camp

Adventurers, Pioneers and Frontiers. As a C.I.T. I had the opportunity to meet with Counsellors, Junior Counsellors, campers and staff and started learning what the programming was like in each group.

Once I started learning how to canoe, I felt like this was the place I wanted to be. To be honest, one day while paddling on Wannamaker a chorus of lyrics and a tune that was in rhythm with each stroke, started running through my head. The lyric was Pull the Water, Pull the Water,

Red Canoe splashing through the waves. I played around with that on the guitar and a basic G-C-D chord structure and started writing verses that talked about the experiences I was hearing about from campers in each of the groups, in particular where they were going on their canoe and camping adventures.

I would have to say Paul Long's camp song inspired me to write a song about camp life. I still play it and really enjoy singing the verses as they conjure up vivid images of each of the lines for the story. The chorus is fun to sing too. The song has never been recorded, but now I have access to a studio, great musicians and voices out here in the Shuswap (Salmon Arm B.C.) I would like to produce it with a crackling campfire as part of the soundtrack.

ADVEN-ION-RON (ADVENTURES/PIONEER/FRONTIER – PULL THE WATER – TED CROUCH 1970)

VERSE 1

RED CANOE PADDLE FLASHING, O'ER THE WAVE WE GO
MANY A MILE WE WILL TRAVEL BEFORE OUR TRIP IS THROUGH
SPLASHING THROUGH THE WAVES, LET THE WATER SPRAY YOUR FACE
SHIRT OF YOUR BACK, SUN DANCING DOWN ON YOU.

CHORUS

AND WE SING, PULL THE WATER, PULL THE WATER
RED CANOE SKIMMING THROUGH THE WAVES
PULL THE WATER, YEAH PULL THE WATER
RED CANOE SKIMMING THROUGH THE WAVES

VERSE 2

ADVENTURERS OUT IN A WAR CANOE, OUT ON WANNAMAHER
ONWARD TO BEAR ISLAND, CAMP THROUGH THE DARK
PITCH YOUR TENT, COOK YOUR MEAL, SIT BY YOUR FIRE AT NIGHT
THESE BOYS ARE GROWING TO PIONEERS, ONWARD THEY WILL GO

CHORUS

VERSE 3

PIONEERS IN CABINS ONE TO SIX, CANOE ON WESLEMAKOOON
TO EFFINGHAM, UP TO OTTER, SEE THE GIRLS REAL SOON
CAMP TWO DAYS, FISH A LITTLE, LEARN ABOUT THE WOODS
GET READY FOR THE FRONTIER DAYS, THEY WILL BE AWAITING YOU

CHOROUS

VERSE 4

FRONTIERS ON THE FAR SIDE IN CABINS ONE TO FIVE
SWIMMING OFF THEIR PRIVATE DOCK, CAREFUL WHERE YOU DIVE
WHILE WAITING TO GO OUT ON TRIP, SOME READ A POCKET BOOK
OTHERS FISH DEEP IN THE LAKE, SURE TO GET ONE HOOKED

CHOROUS

VERSE 1 – REPEAT CHOROUS

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Reflections

If you were wearing your Camp Wangoma Jacket and hitch hiking outside Camp you were guaranteed a ride by people in the local community. I remember hitch hiking from McArthur's Mills to Bancroft. I got picked up at Slater's store in McArthur's Mills. As we started moving down the highway the driver mentioned they did not have a license. However, I made it safely a half mile down the road before the driver had to turn off the road to their house.

Murray Pope Counsellor and a Junior Counsellor hitch hiked to Toronto with a drunk driver. The next day Murray's brother gave him a ride back to camp. He mentioned today he wouldn't even hitch hike across the street.

Ron Richan and Doug Millington Camp Staff hold the record for going the greatest distance from Camp on their two days off. Camp to Montreal – to Ottawa – to Camp.

Brant Willis Pioneer Section Director 1966 (Old Walleye) held the Camp record traveling to Toronto in a Volks Wagon. Camp to his door in the Beaches in Toronto 2 hours and 45 minutes.

Side note – All Volks Wagons in 1959 had a coffee maker. The Volks Wagon was built to be the family car. But the really purpose they were built was during the Second World War to carry a machine gun mounted on their roof.

Alf Grigg – Camp Wangoma Staff – 1964 - 1971

WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER
Before the Memories Fade
Ninth Edition

March 2022

Welcome to the Ninth Edition of WANGOMATTERS! Thank you everyone for your support of the past Editions of “WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEAR LATER – Before the Memories Fade!”

I went to visit a psychic. I knocked on her door and she yelled “Who is it?” So, I left.

If you know of some former Camp Wangoma Staff and Campers who would like to be on the mailing list just send me their name and email address and I will add them to the list.

I am looking for contributors to share their highlight(s) of Camp Wangoma for the Heading REFLECTIONS for the upcoming Editions of WANGOMATTERS 50 YEARS LATER. Send me an email with your highlight(s), if you would like to share. I will make sure it gets published in one of the upcoming Editions.

Also, please send me a memory or memories as I present each Camp Director and I will include them in the next issue of “WANGOMATTERS”

BIG THANK YOU TO BILL THORSTEINSON – Camp Director Camp Wangoma 1961 – 1963 for the article on “The Fire Truck”.

BIG THANK YOU TO LAURENCE LEE – Camper 1966 -1968 for sharing his reflection on the Camp Song.

BIG THANK THANK YOU TO DUREL LOTT – Counsellor/Section Director 1968 – 1962 sharing his reflection about Camp Directors Ivan Robinson and Bill Thorsteinson.

BIG THANK YOU TO CAM SMITH – sharing the Staff letter sent out by Bob Nesbitt when he was leaving to take up the executive position with a Elmwood Rildonan Y in Winnipeg.

SAYING

“May your choices reflect your hopes not your fears” Nelson Mandala

HUMOUR

Interesting Signs;

Who hates Speeding Tickets? Raise your right foot!

Adam and Eve were the first ones to ignore Apple Terms and Conditions.

Dear Algebra – Please stop asking us to find X. She’s never coming back and don’t ask Y.

Shop local cause Amazon won’t sponsor your kids ball team.

Man with a sign outside a Walmart store. Not homeless – Wife in Walmart two and a half hours! Please Help!

THEY NEVER TAUGHT US THIS IN SCHOOL

Us older people need to learn something new every day just to keep the gray matter tuned up.

Where did “It’s raining like cats and dogs” come from?

In the fifteenth century Europe houses had thatched roofs. Thick straw piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm. So, it all the cats, dogs and other small animals (mice, bugs lived in the roof). When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence, the saying “It’s raining cats and dogs.” There was nothing to stop things falling in the house.

This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top offered some protection. That’s how canopy beds came into existence.

Bob Nesbitt (The Guy) Camp Director 1964- 1967

By Alf Grigg

Bob Nesbitt graduated from Sir George Willimas University in Montreal with a BA in 1959. He worked as a Program Secretary with St. Catherine’s Y.

1964 – 1967 Bob was full time Camp Director of Camp Wangoma.

1968 he became Executive Director of Elmwood Rildonan Y in Winnipeg.

After his marriage fail, he moved to Cranberry Portage in Northern Manitoba to run a business.

One of the fellows that worked with Bob for a few years at the Y mention a few years back a canoe trip from Y Camp Stephens ran into Bob in Cranberry Portage.

Bob remarried.

Bob passed away in Elkhorn Manor Cranberry Portage September 24, 2020 – 85 years old.

Cam Smith sent me a letter Bob Nesbitt sent out in the fall of 1967 to all Camp Wangoma Staff.

“Just recently, I have accepted an offer by the Winnipeg YMCA to become the Executive Director of one of their Family Branch YMCA (Elmwood Kildonan). The decision was not an easy one for me, for any move meant leaving Wangoma and the very fine group of staff people who are and have been there.

My move takes me out of the camping, and it would have to, since I know that Wangoma is the finest camp, bar none, that I’ve ever seen, visited or heard of.

My decision to leave Camp Wangoma and the Camping Branch was very difficult, but it was lightened by the thoughts of a sound camping philosophy on which Wangoma was built, a strong and effective existing staff who will carry on, no doubt in the same dynamic way, and by a loyal group of campers who are Wangoma through and through.”

Wangomatters – August 1967

FROM BOB’S BENCH

“Good friends, good weather, good trips, good programs, great camp! That’s the way it can be summed up. Each one of us will remember different things from the period but no doubt it has been the friends that we have made or been with that we’ll remember the longest. Wangoma camping is really friends living and working and playing in the outdoors. It has been my pleasure to see many of you again and to meet many new campers. I sincerely hope that you’ve enjoyed yourself and we’ll look for you again in’68 at Wangoma.”

Bill Wood – Camp Director – 1968

By Alf Grigg

Saturday April 9, 2011, I had finished early being involved with the CIRA-Ontario Conference at Geneva Park Orillia, Ontario. I had no idea where Bill Wood lived in Orillia and it had been several years since I had visited with him. As I drove up to the house where I thought he lived, I saw three young children playing on the front lawn and a young lad in his early twenties sit ting on the front porch. I asked the young lad on the porch if this was the house where Bill Wood lived? The young lad went inside and a few moments later, out came an older man that looked like an aged Bill Wood. It was Bill, but it took a few minutes for him to recognize me. Bill is in the early stages of Alzheimer’s disease. Once, we had a conversation for ten minutes a lot of things started to trigger his memory. Unfortunately, he could not remember anything about Camp Wangoma. At the end of our visit, he gave me a big hug and a big smile and asked when I would be coming back again.

Bill had graduated from George Williams University the Y University in Chicago Illinois. Sir George Williams was the Y University in Montreal, which is now Concordia University. He was the Program Secretary at East City Y in the Beaches area of the City of Toronto on Kingston Road. Before he was Director of Camp Wangoma, he had been the Camp Director of Camp Beausoleil which was supported and sponsored by Broadview Y.

After he directed Camp Wangoma, he became Executive Director of Broadview Y. In 1970, Bill became the Executive Director of the Orillia Y. Bill was involved in the transition of the old Y building to the new Y building Skip Watson Y. 1983 he left the Y and became the Camp Director of Camp Couchiching located off the Rama Rd just south of Geneva Park. Some years later Bill left Camp Couchiching and became involved in making kitchen cabinets. As he was getting older, he had a lot of problems lifting materials and ended up getting a job at the Walmart store in Orillia. He then retired to spend time with his family and grandchildren. Bill Wood died February 16, 2016 Orillia, Ontario.

The Fire Truck
By Bill Thorsteinson

In the early 1960's, the local Health Inspector suggested that there was a fire risk at Camp Wangoma. There was no system to protect not only the Junior and Senior sections but, it was obvious we had a problem. The cost of providing water to those distance sections would be prohibitive, but we had no choice.

This was a matter, not only for the Camp Committee, but also the East York Y Board of Directors. So, Alex Leslie, who was the East York Y Executive Director, Bruce Ingram the Camp Committee Chairman and I raised the matter at a Board Meeting. There was no immediate solution. A day or so later I got a call from Roy Brigham, a member of the Board and also a member of the East York Council. Roy has an interesting and quite unique solution to our problem.

The Mayor of East York at that time was True Davidson. She had recently visited Sweden and there had been some very creative children's playgrounds. She discovered upon her return that the East York Fire Department was about to retire one of its older fire trucks. True thought it a great idea if the fire truck was moved to a playground, How, exciting for the children to be able to play on a real fire truck!

The Fire Chief, however did not like the idea at all. A standoff developed between the Fire Chief and the Mayor. Roy thought he had a solution to the standoff and the Wangoma problem. Would the Wangoma problem be solved if the camp had a real fire truck on the Property? Would the Fire Chief see this as an appropriate use for the fire truck? The answer to all three questions was a resounding YES!

Roy negotiated the deal and the fire truck was soon the property of Camp Wangoma. There were still a couple of hurdles however. This was not a pumper truck, so we had to have a water tank installed in the truck bed. As I recall this cost us a couple of hundred dollars; small change compared to what we were otherwise faced with. As well the Fire Chief threw in an old but usable hose. The truck could easily get to the required distance from any building in the camp and the weight of water in the tank was sufficient to power the hose long enough to quell a fire.

The next hurdle was to get the truck to camp. One fine Saturday morning Bob Coates and I arrived at the Fire Hall and were given the keys to the truck. Off we went through East York to the Don Valley Parkway to the 401 and on to Camp Wangoma. What I recall the journey was that car after car pulled over to the side to let us pass. What a sense of power and we didn't even have a siren! We pulled into camp and handed the keys over to Ray Loney. Ray had cleared out a section of the barn to serve as a garage for the truck. He gave it a spin around the camp and up behind both the Junior and Senior sections to ensure the hose would reach all the buildings. Then he returned it to the garage and we went to the kitchen and enjoyed a cup of coffee.

The Health Inspector was informed and approved of our rather unique solution. I cannot recall ever having to use the truck for an actual fire; at least not while I was Director. But it did serve to hose down the dusty road on visitor's day.

Note: Later in the sixties the fire truck was used once to put out a fire at a small logging mill in the community. Also, the fire truck was used to carry Santa Claus in the July 25 Christmas parades down to Langmedes and back to the camp.

Reflections

The 8th Edition of WANGOMATTERS – “Lots of meaning ... Re songs. As a camper from 66-68, I remember well when the Wangoma song came out. Paul Long (aka – The Big Kahuna?). Performed at the Barn Show, in conjunction of another favorite. “The Counsellor, Who Never Returned (and his fate is still unknown. He wanders forever around Lake Wannamaker. He is the Counsellor who never returned...)” Those are all the words I can remember. Laurence Lee - Camper

“I remember particularly Ivan and Bill both were camp directors I worked for and respected.”
Durel Lott – Camp Wangoma Staff – 1960 - 1962

Bruce Ingram chair of the Camp Wangoma Camp Committee was the funeral director of Ingram Funeral Homes with the main home at Pape and Gerrard in Toronto. Some of us were in College /University and we finished our year in classes at the end of April. We had two months before camp. Bruce had made two job opportunities available for staff to work at Pine Hill Cemetery as a labourer.

Tim Clarke and I worked at the Cemetery in the mid sixties. Our highlight was accidentally putting a hole in the tire of the foreman’s wheelbarrow and being chased all over the Cemetery. The next year George Rowell and I worked at the Cemetery. Our highlight was going across the street one day from the Cemetery to the Dairy Queen at lunch. One of us order a Blueberry Milk Shake. I think it was the employee’s first day on the job. She did not put the container with the liquid for the shake on the mixer properly. When she pushed the button to start the mixer the liquid went all over her and the counter. We couldn’t believe it! Ten minutes later she had everything cleaned up. She asked us for our next order. We order another Blueberry Milk Shake! The same thing happened! It brought new meaning to shake, get rattled and get on a roll!

Alf Grigg – Camp Wangoma Staff – 1964 - 1971

WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER
Before the Memories Fade
Tenth Edition

April 2022

Welcome to the Tenth Edition of WANGOMATTERS! Thank you everyone for your support of the past Editions of “WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEAR LATER – Before the Memories Fade!”

I felt a little uncomfortable driving into the cemetery the other day. The GPS blurted out you have reached your final destination.

I am looking for contributors to share their highlight(s) of Camp Wangoma for the Heading REFLECTIONS for the upcoming Editions of WANGOMATTERS 50 YEARS LATER. Send me an email with your highlight(s), if you would like to share. I will make sure it gets published in one of the upcoming Editions.

65th Annual Wangoma Open Golf Tournament (Golf as it was meant to be played). Tuesday June 14, 2022. If, you are interested in playing contact Doc Ballard m2001@rogers.com
The Annual Camp Wangoma Alumni Reunion will be held at Camp (Cedar Ridge) the first weekend after Canadian Thanksgiving. More information contact Doc m2001@rogers.com

BIG THANK YOU TO ANDREW HARVIE for sharing his story/reflection on Jordan Hill and reflection on George Rodgers.

BIG THANK YOU TO ROB COOK for sharing his reflection on someone going to the beach at night.

BIG THANK YOU TO MURRAY POPE – Camp Counsellor 1964 for sharing his reflection on Bob Nesbitt.

SAYING

“We have two ends with a common link; with one we sit and with one we think. Success depends on which we use; it’s heads we win or tails we lose.” Butt Head

HUMOUR

At our age, we can hide our own Easter Eggs. Wait half an hour and we have no clue where we left them.

Just before I die, I am going to swallow a bag of popcorn kernels. My cremation is going to be epic.

The oldest computer can be traced back to Adam and Eve. Surprise! Surprise! It was an Apple. But with extremely limited memory. Just one byte, then everything crashed.

THEY NEVER TAUGHT US THIS IN SCHOOL

Us older people need to learn something new every day just to keep the gray matter tuned up.

A SHOT OF WHISKEY

In the old west a .45 cartridge of a six-gin cost 12 cents. If a cowhand was low on cash, he would often give the bartender a cartridge in exchange for a drink. This became known as a “shot” of whisky.

OVER A BARREL

In the days before CPR a drowning victim would be placed down over a barrel and the barrel would be rolled back and forth in an effort to empty the lungs of water. It was rarely effective. If you are over a barrel, you are in deep trouble.

**Dr Rod Gleason – Camp Director 1969
Thunder Bay Chronicle Journal – March 9, 2019**

Rod was born in Vickers Heights Thunder Bay August 7, 1933 and the eldest of five siblings. During his teen years he and his siblings were known as the Acro Quintette that entertained audiences both in the City and Region.

Graduated from Fort William Collegiate. Attained his degree in Physical Education from George Williams College in Chicago.

Rod was involved throughout his life with the YMCA from Regina to Fort William to Toronto. 1954 Rod was the Assistant Director of Sunfish Camp it's last year on Lake Simcoe.

1969 he Directed Camp Wangoma.

Rod spent many summers Camp Director of Kinsman Camp in Thunder Bay.

He obtained his Chiropractor Degree from the Canadian Chiropractic College in Toronto Taught in the Recreation and Leisure Diploma program at Confederation College while practicing in a clinic in Thunder Bay.

Became active with many boards of the Chiropractor Society of North West Ontario and in Vancouver British Columbia.

Retired in 1996 to develop a home practice in Murillo Ontario.

Marisa was his soul mate for 45 years.

He has four sons and nine grandchildren.

Donations made to the Alzheimer's Society.

**George Rodgers Camp Director 1970 – 1972
Counselling Foundation of Canada**

George worked for the Y for over 52 years. Attended High School and University in Nova Scotia. During that time, he was a member of Hi Y, Counsellor at Big Cove Camp and a fellowship student at the community Y in Halifax.

He began his full-time career with the YMCA of Greater Toronto in 1967.

His first camp, he was Camp Director of the Y Camp Norval.

1970 – 1972 George was Camp Director of Camp Wangoma.

He rose to the position of vice-president of the Financial and Facility Department for Project Management and Capital Campaigns for five new YMCA facilities for the Greater Toronto Area.

During this time, he became founder of the North American YMCA Development Organization and the first Secretary Treasurer.

1981 he became CEO to the Y of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth while working as the National Consultant Y Canada on Philanthropy and Capital Development.

1996 – 2004 worked as Senior Vice President of Development for the YMCA – Greater Vancouver provided program management and campaign direction to the New Tong Loutes Family Y.

2005 – 2008 he held the position of MRC Coordinator for Canada East and served as Design and Capital Campaign Consultant for the new downtown Robert Lee Y.

He was a Strategic Consultant for many Canadian Ys as well to the Alliance of Ys in Geneva Switzerland and YMCA Canada.

Rejoined the staff of the YMCA Greater Vancouver in 2016 as the Co-Director of the What Really Matters Campaign to help fund four new centres for communities in the lower mainland and Fraser Valley.

Recipient Queen's Jubilee Medal and made a Companion Member of the YMCA Canada Fellowship of Honour in 2013.

Director on the Foundation Board since 2005. Last heard of in Peggy's Cove Nova Scotia.

Jordan Hill Camp Director 1973

By Andrew Harvie – CIT, JC, Counsellor and Section Director – 1971 - 1973

It's hard to believe that it was almost 50 years ago that we had our last summer at Wangoma! I didn't immediately realize that recalling the story of Jordan Hill, the last Director of Wangoma, would mean putting myself in his shoes. When you are young and inexperienced at life, and particularly when you are so invested in an enterprise like a summer camp...well it is all about you!

The reality of the seventies was that boys summer camp enrollment was shifting for a number of reasons and camps that didn't adapt in camping programming, facilities and their marketing efforts were fading quickly. The YMCA Camping Service (as a product of the

Toronto Y) was by its very nature, slow to respond to change. Camp Wangoma, Beausoleil, Norval and Pine Crest were starved of resources and at some point, the “duct tape” repairs just didn’t cut it! Parents noticed! They realized that they could send their kids to a camp on the next lake over for a little bit more money and get a whole lot more “activities”. They also had the option of choosing from a myriad of specialty camps that were popping up in side and outside Ontario cities. Suddenly there was competition galore.

I’m very certain that even before the last Wangoma summer began, The YMCA Camping Service has a good idea the gate would be closed to summer residential camping on lake Wanamaker. I’m assuming therefore. It wasn’t a priority to find a Camp Director of George Rodger quality to take on the final shift. Just find a guy that could ride the wave to the shore and be done with it.

My memory is a little fuzzy on Jordan Hills’ background, but I know he was a counsellor (in the YMCA Counselling Service) and he was working on a contract. He had lots of skills in working with youth but no camp experience. When I first met him at pre-camp, he was confident, outgoing and was enthusiastic to be there. Of course, he wasn’t George and that was a BIG hole to climb out of to win the hearts and minds or returning staff.

As an aside, some years later when I was the Assistant Camp Director at Pine Crest, the Camping Service hired Bob Krause, a former Hamilton Tiger-Cats football star to direct the camp. He didn’t listen, was totally insecure in the environment and let’s just say it was a miserable experience for all.

The point is in retrospect...we actually got a pretty good deal with Jordan. As most camp staffs roll, we tend to be a pretty inward focussed bunch and change “ain’t a good thing”. Memories of the last summer permeate everything and expectations of future years of traditions abound. On top of that, George Rodger and George Rowell had set a very high leadership bar...talk about a tough act to follow in a tough environment! In fact, for someone that’s the least bit self-aware (Jordan was very self-aware), the first week into camp must have been mind blowing. Staff in overalls, talking their unique camp language, kids running all over the place and the realization that camp could be a very dangerous place without firm leadership...yikes!

In spite of the challenges, Jordan assumed his role as Director. In the dining hall as an example-awkwardly at first but he listened to advice and as the month of July moved on, he actually got pretty good at the Joke of the day or “Cocker’s Corner.” He also spent a lot of time out in the camp, not holed up in the office. We mocked him for rolling his canoe time and time again trying to stay upright but of course in retrospect...good for him having the confidence to put himself out there for all to see! (We all know there was a good reason why George Rodger never went near the canoe dock!)

I remember working with Jordan on camper cabin assignments and we had all the applications spread out on the floor of the Director’s Cottage. He listened to the input of staff and as we placed friends together, kids with favourite counsellors, he pushed hard for the reasons for our decisions. We would discover later in life that these were just good management principles applicable to any situation.

I don't think there is any need to dwell on some of the sad decisions that had to be made in reducing staff numbers to match declining period enrollment. BUT perhaps a "break" for Jordan is due here.

Imagine you are just getting the hang of camp life and earning some trust from the staff and then word comes from "Head Office" for staff reduction. I can only speak for myself, but I knew NOTHING about the realities of "business". I just wanted everything to stay the same...PERIOD. It was heartbreaking for all of us that it couldn't.

There were two experiences that stand out in my mind where Jordan, both surprised me and demonstrated he had my back.

In the final period of Camp Wangoma site (the final, final was at Pine Crest) Danny Nourse and I were going to switch jobs. He was going to take Frontier 5 and I was going to manage Out Trip. A couple of days into camp he decided not to make the switch. Jordan had the patience to let us work it out.

The next day, Bert dropped the F5 crew (after MANY hours of the "Momas and Poppas and Stoppin Tom Conners) in Arnprior. Out destination was Lake Mazinaw via the Mississippi River.

I had a GREAT J.C. – Owen Lemieux and F5 were a tough bunch of city kids that had never been on a canoe trip. It took a few days but they ended up as one of those cabin groups that rose to the challenge. Given that the trip was flat river and lake paddling (long but not difficult) the challenge became speed and endurance, and we made amazing time. We arrived at the marina on Lake Mazinaw three days ahead of schedule.

Brian Blackstock who was Director of Camp Mazinaw invited us to camp on their property for the night. (Camp Mazinaw which was established in the forties by a teacher from East York Collegiate Mr. Hambly. Brian's dad "Blackie" was the first Camp Director and eventually one of the three owners). That evening Brian told us about an old logging/cottage road that ran from Hwy 41 north of Lake Mazinaw to and beyond Effingham. That night, the exhilaration and celebration was second to none.....until the sun collapsed and the mosquitoes attacked! When we go to Calvery's Landing we had to make a decision.... Hartsmere Road back to camp...another call to Jordan. He understood the "camp cred" of actually finishing the trip at camp without being trucked in. He suggested that getting our equipment trucked back would still give us the "win." I think there was a stop at the Chutes and the Bakery...

The second Jordan story involved the negotiation of the transfer of staff and campers for the final Wangoma period at Camp Pine Crest, I realized what a BAD decision this was.... but in the twilight of Wangoma, we wanted to be together.

Jordan and I arrived at Pine Crest just after lunch and we walked down to the Junior Section staff lodge to meet with Don Pringle the Camp Director, Tony Fry who was the GM of the Camping Service and Murray Huff the PC Assistant Director. What a WILD meeting!!! Giving Wangoma autonomy would mean a LOT of rearranging for Pine Crest and the final period was the camp games. Here was Pine Crest (I went there as a camper) that had done things the same way for decades and the Wangoma boys wanted to upset the apple cart! I think you have the picture!

Jordan was magnificent. Honestly, he didn't back down. He negotiated hard. As the sunset on "first point" on Clear Lake we got our way!
 Did we make it work? Sure! Was it hard yup! Did we stick out in our overalls...we sure did!
 We finished the last period of Wangoma with a little bit of dignity! We learned the Pine Crest song and some of the more progressive PC staff learned "We are the Boys from Camp Wangoma."

I never saw or talked to Jordan after that summer. I have never forgotten this man. He had absolutely no previous ties to Wangoma, no future in camping at the YMCA and yet he had our back to the very end.

A very long overdue...Thank you, Jordan!

Reflections

Murray Pope – Camp Counsellor 1964 - Memory of Bob Nesbitt

My memory of Bob was that of a good man. The fact that those of us still standing have so many great memories of Wangoma speaks volumes for the man who during his years as Camp Director. I have a vivid memory that speaks to the man's character. One night another counsellor and I were paddling back from the lodge at the far end of the lake. The other counsellor (Danny?) began to sing the North Atlantic Squadron and I joined in. Well, awaiting us on the dock with a pipe in their mouth was Bob. He was not impressed that our vocalizing came across the lake to every resident cottager and perhaps curled the ears of some. Bob in his calm manner, admonished the two of us for our indiscretion and the message was received. Thank you, Bob.

Rob Cook – Camper CIT, Junior Counsellor, Camp Counsellor, Canoe Dir, Prog Dir. 1966 – 1973

In the summer of 1971 or 1972 a couple of new counsellors (I think Andrew Harvie may have been one of them) were on night patrol in the Pioneer section. They came into the lodge to report a mysterious figure who had just walked by the on the path along the lake with a flashlight. Not an easy thing given the number of rocks and roots to navigate around. The person was carrying a valise, wearing overflowing boxer shorts, a beach ball under his arm and sporting a hard hat with a racoon tail dangling from it. As he passed by them, he simply said "just going to the beach!" All of us in the lodge turned and said "Alf is here for the weekend. He's probably thinking to hide out in Pioneer six which isn't in use so that we can't pull any pranks on him while he's asleep." I was one of those who owed him a prank or two. I remember waking up one morning when I was a Counsellor in Adventurer one in 1970 and I couldn't get out of bed because there was a canoe on the floor beside me.

Andrew Harvie CIT, Junior Counsellor, Counsellor, Section Director – 1971 - 1973

When I was a JC there were I'm sure you remember a narrows, pass the Ivy Cottage and the paddle "right" to the end of the bay was a Air Cadet Camp. There were some cadets there one night and a group of us paddled the war canoe down to find unlimited amounts of beer. On the way back, we paddled past the Ivy Cottage in "stealth mode"... success as we paddled the war canoe past the island someone looked back and there was a candle burning brightly on the balcony railing....George knew....never said a word.

WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER
Before the Memories Fade
Eleventh Edition

May 2022

Welcome to the Eleventh Edition of WANGOMATTERS! Thank you everyone for your support of the past Editions of “WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEAR LATER – Before the Memories Fade.”

I found out the other day that the location of your mailbox shows you how far away from your house you can go in a robe before you start looking like a mental patient.

Rick Lembke (Arch) Camp Wangoma Staff 1967/1968 passed away May 6, 2022. Words seem inadequate to express the sadness we feel at the tragic lost of Arch. Our condolences go out to Arch’s wife, daughter, two sons and their families in this time of sorrow.

65th Annual Wangoma Open Golf Tournament (Golf as it was meant to be played). Tuesday June 14, 2022. If, you are interested in playing contact Doc Ballard m2001@rogers.com
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BIG THANK YOU TO GARY ASSELSTINE for sharing his stories/reflections on Christie Street House, Camp Wangoma, Bum Waddos and what this has all meant in his life.
BIG THANK YOU TO ROB COOK for sharing his reflection on the Island Swim
BIG THANK YOU TO MURRAY POPE – Camp Counsellor 1964 for sharing his reflection on Rob Gleason.

SAYING

“You have to accept whatever comes and the only important thing is that you meet it with courage and with the best that you have to give.” Eleanor Roosevelt

HUMOUR

You can lead a horse to water but you can’t make him drink.
Freddie Smith wanted to help Horace Finkbinder become a Camp Counsellor. He led Horace to another friend, Walter Smith for tutoring.
Walter covered each essential in turn. Swimming: Horace did it. Archery: Horace did it.
Camp fruit drink. Horace choked.
Planning cabin activities: Horace did it. Song leading: Horace became very good.
Horace offer, camp fruit drink again. Horace choked.
Cannot become a Counsellor.
The message that Freddie got was: You can lead a Horace to Walter but you can’t make him drink!”

THEY NEVER TAUGHT US THIS IN SCHOOL

Us older people need to learn something new every day just to keep the gray matter tuned up.

BOUQUET OF FLOWERS

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May and they still smelled pretty good by June. However, since they were starting to smell, brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide their body odor.

Hence, the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

LEAD CUPS USED TO DRINK ALE

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat, drink and wait to see if they would wake up. Hence, the custom "holding a wake."

RAYMOND LONEY/ORPHA LONEY

By Alf Grigg

When I think of Camp Wangoma, Raymond Loney and Orpha Loney always come to mind. Raymond was the Property Supervisor starting when the camp opened in 1956. As I understand Raymond drove for Smith Transport for many years until he had a serious truck accident before he started working at camp.

Raymond was a real character who was ideal for the job. I remember after our 17-day CIT canoe trip in 1964, Raymond picking us up from Algonquin Park and stopping on the way back to camp to take us horseback riding.

Later on, that summer a counsellor by the name of Bill Pratt decided to pull a prank on Raymond. Raymond hung his jacket on a tree while he was doing some maintenance work on the Adventure washrooms. Bill nailed the jacket to the tree. The lunch bell went, Raymond walked over to the tree, grabbed his jacket and tore a hole in the back of his jacket. He let out a few choice words, but said nothing else. Two days later, Bill Pratt did a laundry and hung his clothes on the clothes line crossing the road by the laundry room. Out of the blue roaring down the hill came Raymond in the Scout (Jeep) that caught the laundry line and dragged Bill's clothes to the bottom of the hill.

Not being a fast learner, two years later I got Raymond with a bucket of water that fell from the top of the door frame when he entered the rear door to the kitchen. That summer, I was bunked at top of the Boathouse. A couple of days later during rest period, Raymond drove the fire truck down to the back of the Boathouse. I remember him calling out "Alf, do you have an umbrella?" I remember responding "Why?" Next thing I knew the fire hose is turned on from the fire truck and water is pouring through the window at the back of the Boathouse.

Remember, Raymond playing the harmonica on Banquet Night and Holly his dog singing? Remember, Raymond as the local auctioneer? If you were camp staff and attended any of his auctions and you moved you were sold the item. One auction, I remember Raymond selling some raw rubies for \$35.00 a piece. They came from the mine down by Snake Creek approximately 3 miles east of Hardwood Lake. Also, the auctions were a great place to get some great items for camp. Remember the great mines Raymond use to take cabin groups: Silver Crater, McDonald and Sodalite?

Raymond was a real character but his wife Orpha used to keep Raymond in line. Orpha for many years was the head cook in the kitchen. In 1967 after camp Steve Morris and I had the opportunity to stay at camp for an extra week to paint the Dining Hall. Steve had to go home for a couple of days and I was at the camp by myself. Raymond and Orpha invited me over to their place for supper. After supper we went into their living room for dessert and had a great conversation about the camp. It was really special being invited into the living room of a person's house which was one of my fond memories of camp.

Bob Coates

By Alf Grigg

Bob Coates was a camp committee member of the Y's Camp Sunfish on Lake Simcoe. Due to the spreading population of cottages on Lake Simcoe, the East York Y was looking for another site for a resident camp. They purchased the site where Cedar Ridge Camp (former Camp Wangoma and Nature Land Camp) is situated. Bob Coates was one of the founders and active board members of the Camp Wangoma camp committee. Bob worked for Northern Electric in Toronto. Bob spent most of his weekends and holidays volunteering at camp by helping get equipment for the camp, helping Ray on maintenance and giving the opportunity for a lot of us to come to camp and become a staff member. Bob was responsible for setting up the phone system at camp with the wiring of old phones.

Fall of 1963, Bob gave me the opportunity to go to camp with him on a weekend in October. We stopped at Andersons in Apsley for a pit stop. As we started driving from Apsley to Bancroft in Bob's new black 1963 Chrysler, he asked me if I would like to become a camp counsellor. I responded "What does a Camp Counselor do?" Bob explained in great detail the role of a camp counsellor. It was an Ah! Haw! Moment! for me – an opportunity which started my passion for camping which is still going strong fifty years later! I was one of the many boys Bob took under his wing to support and gave the opportunity to come to camp. Bob was really well known by a lot of people in the local community.

There were weekends when a group of us went to camp from the East York Y. We would end up with Bob visiting one of the locals and watching the Saturday night hockey game with them.

When Bob and Raymond got together you knew it was going to be fun! Nothing seemed impossible for this pair to solve. Such as, putting the large freighter canoe on telephone posts at the main entrance to the camp.

Unfortunately, in the late sixties with a change in direction of the Toronto Y Camping Services we lost Bob Coates.

Bob ended up looking after his dad in Toronto until his dad passed away. Bob then retired to Gores Landing on Rice Lake. He ended up at the Older Adult Golden Plough Lodge in Coburg Ontario and passed away in the early nineteen nineties.

Bert Brownsberger
By Alf Grigg

Bert Brownsberger was a Mennonite who moved from the Mennonite Community in Markham to the Mennonite Community in Carlow Township. He lived at the four corners of the Boulter Road on the Northwest corner. He had a 23-acre farm raising rabbits and goats. As the winter got colder, he would just bring in one more goat into his house to keep warm. Bert was hired as a seasonal worker to help Raymond Loney the Property Supervisor of the camp.

When Raymond retired Bert became the Property Supervisor.

Also, Bert was involved with the Mennonite Camp, Fraser Lake Camp.

When Bert was hired, I wasn't in camp for long periods of time. So, I didn't get to know him well. However, I remember bunking in the boat house and Bert giving us a pet rabbit. We called the rabbit Ralphina (We weren't sure if the rabbit was a boy or girl).

I really got to know Bert during 1974-1976 when I use to take the Teens from Beaches Recreation Centre for Wahoo Weekends in the winter to the Ivy Cottage. I would phone Bert the night before and tell him what time we would arrive at the Ivy the next day. He would make sure the heat was on in the Ivy, it was clean and there was a hole in the ice to get water.

The teens loved Bert for who Bert was and his stories.

I remember organizing a hay ride with Bert for the teens starting from his house. He had his tractor and wagon ready for the hay ride. For fun, I asked him if he had passed the Protractor course in math. So, he could drive the tractor. He said he had done very well in math class and began inch by inch to become the ruler of the class. For trying to be a smart turkey, I ended up running the whole hayride.

A few years later Bert married a Mennonite woman in Manitoba that lived on a farm with eight children. Two years later I got a letter from his wife mentioning Bert had passed away from a heart attack.

CHRISTIE STREET BOY'S HOME
By Gary Asselstine

It was April 1967. My mother 29 years old, single with 8 kids aged 5-13 years could no longer afford to take care of us. Social Assistance and Mother's Allowance wasn't enough to pay the bills. We had a father who wouldn't provide any child support. My Mom could no longer take care of us. So, all eight of us were placed in foster homes. I really lucked out by landing

at Chrisie Street Boys Home. It was a home for 16-18-year, old boys. Most foster homes generally did not want to have anything to do with teenage boys. I was the last of eight children to get placed, because I was 13 years old. From what I understand, they took me in because nobody else would. CSBH were slightly apprehensive because all the other boys were at least 3 years older than me at 13 years of age, which was a large gap, but they accepted me anyway.

It was a huge house with a large dormitory type bedroom. We had a cook, a music room and a very long table that sat 20 at a time. The living room and the ceiling itself were big. So large that at Christmas time, we had a 25- foot Christmas tree brought into the living room each Christmas. The living room was a gym every Monday night where a judo instructor would come and teach all of us. I got to take electric guitar lessons and would practice in the music room every day. It was fabulous.

I mixed in with most of the boys. Soon after arriving, I saw they were playing Table Hockey. They didn't know I'd received a Hockey Table every Christmas since I could remember. None of them could beat me. Even the 18-year-old could not come close. It was great place to live for the two years I was there. But the best thing I got from CSBH was the opportunity to go to Camp Wangoma for 6 weeks for two summers.

I have never forgotten and never will!

CAMP WANGOMA

By Gary Asselstine

I remember getting off the bus and walking towards the lake. It was stunning. I had never been outside of Toronto my whole life. I didn't have a clue what to expect. It would turn out to be the greatest thing to happen to me as a young kid. I flourished there swimming, canoeing, row-boating, sleeping in cabins with other boys my age, the meals in the main building and the tuck shop. The big event the second last day of each three-week period was the regatta and the island swim. I would swim everyday. Alf Grigg would encourage and teach me. He was the one who convinced me to enter the island swim. I saw myself only as a sprinter, but Alf said I could do both because I had the talent. So, I entered the race once each year coming in second, in just over 26 minutes. The winner was the scrawny little kid who did it in just over twenty-one minutes.

I was a Frontier camper the first summer, thirteen years old. Then a Voyageur, the second summer when I was fourteen years old. The first summer, I remember camping trips to Lake Weslemekoon and Mazinaw. The next summer, I did two trips to Algonquin Park. The first via Canoe Lake and the second trip via Lake Opeongo. I was a very fast and eager learner. In the summer of 1968, we competed in a regatta against Camp Ponacka on Baptiste Lake. It was my very first competition outside of Camp Wangoma. I was so excited. The races were a variety of swimming and canoeing. I was the big winner that day. I hit the podium for the four events I entered. Bantam canoe doubles and singles, Frontier canoe doubles and the

War Canoe event. I remember Alf making a big deal out of my performances that day. It was a

6

Feeling of inspiration, I will never forget. Camp Wangoma won the regatta by a 13 -12 score! I still have those ribbons to this day.

CANOE TRIPS *By Gary Asselstine*

My most memorable canoe trip was my last one. We were very experienced paddlers and campers by now. The town of Brent in the north part of Algonquin Park was our goal to reach. After we had reached Brent, we were on our way back to be picked up. Half way back on a five- six-day paddle. we ate lunch at a portage. Then paddled down the middle of the lake. Unfortunately, I had to do a number one. It was a warm calm day. So, the other two canoes hooked up together and waited there for our return. We paddled to the closest, easiest spot to land our canoe. We found a spot and headed for it. As we got closer to the shore line, we could see smoke rising in-between the trees near the ground. The smoke was not coming out from the top of the trees as you would expect. I got out of the canoe with the CIT. The other camper stayed in the canoe. I scurried up a little embankment. I remember it getting a little hotter. When you go into the forest in the summer time you would expect it to be cooler. Then I saw something I had never seen before or since. Most of the trees had little tiny fires and smoke coming from the tree trunks and the area around the tree. It was everywhere I looked. It wasn't terrifying to me. I was 14-years old and it was exciting! We got back in the canoe and I reported back to our Counsellor what I had seen. He knew, we had a duty to report this fire. He looked at our maps and located the closest Ranger Tower we could get to.

Our canoe volunteer to paddle to the Ranger Tower. It was a five-hour paddle. Already, we were pretty tired, as we had been paddling since early morning. The other two canoes with the Counsellor remained behind to keep an eye on the fire. They would re-connect with us the next day by lunch at the Ranger Tower. We paddled and paddled and paddled without a break and arrived around 7:00 PM. We went to the Ranger's office cabin but no one was around. Eventually, we made it to the Ranger Tower and looked way, way up. We reluctantly began to climb the steps to the top. We scared the crap out of the Ranger. We told him what we had seen and the location of the fire. The Ranger said it was too late to send out the planes. The fire would be put out early the next morning. We pitched our tent while the Ranger cooked us up a hot meal. Instead of the de-hydrated food we'd been eating the last twelve days of our trip. Eventually we hit the sack and slept well on a full belly. In the morning we had a hot breakfast. The other canoes arrived around lunch-time and made their own de-hydrated lunch. Then off we went heading south to Canoe Lake.

BUM WADDO 100's*By Gary Asselstine*

We were 13 years old the summer of 1967. There were nine of us on a five-day canoe trip, seven Campers, one Junior Counsellor and Counsellor. I had actually started smoking cigarettes earlier that year. So, I was a bit of a veteran now and I wanted to show some of the guys how cool I was. I asked if anyone smoked, some said yes and some said no. I told them I knew how to make cigarettes out here in the wilderness. Of course, they were intrigued, my invention was simple. It was toilet paper and dried dead pine needles. You would collect pine needles, then break them into the same length. Then place them into the thickly papered toilet paper and roll tightly. Then get a flame from our campfire without anyone seeing us do this. Let me tell you something about all of us that we didn't know then. We were both dumb and smart at our age. We tried something stupid but after a few puffs we all stepped on our "Bum-Waddos" never to do that again. To be honest I did try it a few more times secretly trying to design the perfect wilderness cigarette then finally give up and not to listen to any crazy ideas of mind again. I had already got four of us into big trouble at our destination in Brent. It involved train tracks, a slow-moving train, going by, a bear and her cubs, a couple of foxes and rabbit! But that is a story for another time...maybe!

CONCLUSION*By Gary Asselstine*

I wish I could remember, but I don't really remember, how my fellow CSBH buddies felt. It probably had a lot to do with the age difference between me and the other boys from CSBH. Two to four years in age difference is huge at that stage of your life. However, I do remember my feelings after the two summers at camp. At the age of 13, I was a huge fan of Western movies (that was my mom's influence with anything John Wayne). Being a huge reader of Western novels about Buffalo Bill, Wild Bill Hickock, the Pony Express and many others. So, to be able to go to Camp Wangoma and experience the canoe trips I had a wonderful, tremendous experience. It was a total transformation of life for me. I started to think and dream about other things in life that were possible. My family was so poor, we never got to experience things that most families were doing. I was raised in the concrete jungle that was Regent Park. A violent, poor neighbourhood, infamous for its desolation, crime and dis-association with the rest of Toronto. Have the Camp Wangoma experience was monumental to me. It opened my eyes to other adventures and possibilities in life that I had never dreamt of. It was around that time I'd decided I was going to go to university and become a cameraman. The Christie Street Boys Home treated us boys to so many wonderful things that were not possible before I got there. Not only did I get to go to Camp Wangoma but I got to go to Expo 67 and Winter Camp during Christmas and New Year at Camp Wangoma.

It would be 10 years later when I was 23-years old that I finally arrived at Ryerson. The rest of my life worked out just as I planned, becoming a TV cameraman allowed me to travel the

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world, make a great living and enjoy a happy life. It all began in 1967 and Camp Wangoma was part of that. I am grateful!

REFLECTIONS

Who remembers the Island Swim?

The swimming race around the island was one of the highlights of the second Period Wangoma Games when I was a camper. My first year was in the Pioneer five cabin with Counsellor Paul Long, the composer of the first Camp Wangoma Song and later the canoeing director known as Moose. This was in 1966 and I believe it was Paul's first year as a counsellor as well.

That year the swimmers in the island race were accompanied by a safety boat that was either a canoe or a rowboat. There was one staff and one camper in each boat and one rowed or paddled while the other held the rope that was tied around the waist of the swimmer in the water. Paul said he didn't want to pull me out into a canoe so I swam beside a rowboat. The rope was maybe two feet longer than the oar and I spent a lot of energy avoiding getting hit by the oar. At the end of the race Paul said if he'd known I could swim that far, he would have taken a canoe. I came in third and I can't say I would have placed any higher if, he did take a canoe. Rob Cook Camp Wangoma 1966 – 1973

I knew of Rod Gleason in Thunder Bay but had no idea of a Camp Wangoma connection. He had some involvement with the athletic department with sport injuries at Lakehead University. Murray Pope Camp Wangoma 1964

One of my many memories from Camp Wangoma was when I was Out trip Director. I was paddling to visit an Adventurer Cabin Group camped on Bear Island. As I was getting closer to the camp-site, I saw the Counsellor in a row boat rowing with high energy. I caught up to him and asked if, everything was going well? "Everything is great!" he said. "But it will be even better when I get the ice cubes for our drinks from the kitchen." "Unfortunately, I said you will have to go back to the campsite you did not put ice cubes on your menu sheet." He just melted away back to the campsite.

Alf Grigg Camp Wangoma 1964 - 1971

WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER
Before the Memories Fade
Twelfth Edition

June 2022

Welcome to the Twelfth Edition of WANGOMATTERS! Thank you everyone for your support of the past Editions of “WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER – Before the Memories Fade.” This is the final Edition.

In 2005, Danny Nourse former Camp Wangoma Camper and Staff went to the OCA Camping Archives at Trent University looking for information on Camp Wangoma. All he could find were three Camp Wangoma brochures 1959, 1964 and 1966.

The Archives will now have on a flash drive with the title “WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER – Before the Memories Fade” the Twelve Editions.

WE HAVE JUST LEFT A LASTING LEGACY IN CAMPING FOR ALL CAMP WANGOMA CAMPERS AND STAFF!

A flash drive with the Twelve Editions will be sent to the Greater Toronto Y Camping Services Archives.

A Camp Wangoma Binder will be kept in the Library at Cedar Ridge Camp with Camp Wangoma documents. If you have any Camp Wangoma archive material you would like to have in the binder, send me an email wangoma1967@gmail.com

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KEEP IN CONTACT

Annual Camp Wangoma Golf Tournament, Camp Reunion is the first weekend after Thanksgiving and other Alumni Special Events

Contact (Doc) Gary Ballard m2001@rogers.com

History of Camp Wangoma, Archive Material, Memories and Sharing Stories

Contact Alf Grigg wangoma1967@gmail.com

WHAT THE CAMP WANGOMA ALUMNI HAVE ACHIEVED SO FAR!

Plaque in the Dining Hall honouring Ivan Robinson

A paddle in the Dining Hall recognizing Cedar Ridges 10 Year Anniversary.

Dining Hall Plaque recognizing the winners of the Camp Wangoma Annual Golf Tournament.

Plaque in the Dining Hall and the Lodge recognizing the history of Camp Wangoma.

A welcome book in the main office for Camp Wangoma Staff and Campers.

Restored Cedar strip Wangoma Canoe for former Camp Wangoma Campers and Staff to paddle when they visit Cedar Ridge Camp.

Involvement with Cedar Ridge Camp sharing information and skills in camping.

Camp Wangoma Website 2011 – 2018. The Camp Wangoma website was revised in 2019.

With Rick Lembke’s passing we also lost access to the Camp Wangoma Alumni Website which he built and maintained on our behalf. Since the summer is a busy time for all, the website will not be immediately activated. However, to honour Arch’s past efforts a new website will be developed that will make a debut in the Fall, hopefully in time for the 2022 Reunion October 14 – 16, 2022.

Helped sponsor children/youth to Cedar Ridge Camp.
Documented a lasting legacy of the history of Camp Wangoma – WANGOMATTERS – 50 Years Later Before the Memories Fade! – 12 Editions
Camp Wangoma Video 2000
Camp Wangoma Picture Albums with 749 pictures 2021
The History of Camp Wangoma sent to Camp Pinecrest for the Camp Wangoma Lodge.

I was driving along the road when all of a sudden, I had to swerve to avoid a box falling off the truck in front. Seconds later a cop pulled me over for reckless driving. As the cop started writing the ticket, he noticed the box was full of nails and tacks. "I had to swerve or I'd have run over those and blown my tires!" I protested. "Ok", replied the officer ripping up the ticket, "but I'm still taking you in. "What for?" I retorted. "Tacks evasion", answered the cop.

BIG THANK YOU TO MARK SUCKLING Camper and Camp Staff for identifying in Gary Asselstine's Article, he was the JC not CIT in the canoe with Gary when they paddle to the Forest Rangers Tower. We are still trying to figure out who was the third person in the canoe.
BIG THANK YOU TO ANDREW HARVIE for writing the Article on the Camp Wangoma Outdoor Education Centre.

BIG THANK YOU TO GRAYSON BURKE – Camp Director of Cedar Ridge Camp for writing the Article on Cedar Ridge and Outdoor Education Centre and the connection with the Camp Wangoma Staff, Campers and Alumni

CONGRATULATIONS TO NEIL BARNES WINNER OF THE 2022 CAMP WANGOMA GOLF TOURNAMENT!

SAYING

"The campfires will go out but the memories of camp will be for ever"

HUMOUR

Campfire Jokes

How do you tell a Dogwood tree from a pine tree? Because of its bark.

How do trees make a lot of friends? They branch out.

There was a kidnapping in these woods once....it is okay, he woke up the next day.

Did you know you can't run through a campsite? You can only ran through a campsite, because it is "past tents"!

What do trees wear when they go swimming in a lake? Tree Trunks

What is the easiest way to talk to a fish? Drop it a line!

THEY NEVER TAUGHT US THIS IN SCHOOL

Us older people need to learn something new every day just to keep the gray matter tuned up.

Go Like a House on Fire:

In early North American settlement most homes were built of wood rather than stone and the danger of fire was always high. Many homes were isolated with help some distance off and often with no easy access to water. Once such a building caught fire it often burned to the ground so quickly that little could be salvaged. When something “goes like a house on fire” it happens with tremendous speed.

THE CAMP WANGOMA TRANSITION TO OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

By Andrew Harvie Camp Wangoma Staff

After a very emotional last summer of Camp Wangoma “at Pine Crest” in 1973 I was seriously contemplating getting a “real” summer job for the summer of 1974. I must say, the thought of not working a part-time job while attending University was VERY enticing!

In January of 1974, I got a call from Don Pringle who was the current Director of Camp Pine Crest. I was in my first year at U of T and his offer to work in the YMCA camping office a couple of part-time days a week was terrific (the pay was comparable to J.C. pay).

I got to know Don, Tony Fry and the staff. I realized that they weren’t the enemy I thought they were in the final days of Camp Wangoma. My job (among other things) was to call the parents of former Camp Wangoma campers and sell them on returning to Camp Pine Crest. It was about 20% success rate. Parents LOVED Camp Wangoma but were not happy with the “Y” closing the doors. A lot of parents chose to take their kids in other directions. Some of those conversations were particularly hard, when the parent of favourite campers “No Go”.

Pretty much all of the senior leadership team at Camp Pine Crest was not returning for the summer of 1974. For sure, it was being in the right place at the right time. Don offered, and I accepted, the Bantam Section Director’s job at Camp Pine Crest. Honestly, I still had the feeling of being a “traitor”. However, Bala was thriving metropolis compared to McArthur’s Mills (but they didn’t sell overalls in Bala). Speaking of overalls...guess what? Summer of 1973 the Pine Cresters thought the Camp Wangoma staff overall craze was BIZZARE. Fast forward to the end of the first period of 1974 at Camp Pine Crest...staff were out buying overalls like crazy!! My fashion work was done.

During the spring of 1974 work party, I accompanied the repair work crew under the tough-love guidance of Romeo Marchiano the Camp Pine Crest property manager to Camp Wangoma. It was heartbreaking to be at our camp with no people running around. On my first visit, I did what we all use to do on the first day at pre-camp...walk around and visit our favourite spots, looked for initials carved in bunks and grab that canoe we knew didn’t leak and head out for a quick paddle.

Most of the work we did was roofing. Carrying packs of shingles up to the Frontier Section in those bug infested days of April and May were “character building”. Our escape was the Winter Lodge...nice memories...but we were missing the sounds of Cocker belting out a rendition of Canadian Railway Trilogy.

The summer of 1974 at Camp Wangoma was about hosting a few small groups for outdoor education. Summer camp (and revenue) had now migrated to May and June and in the not, too distant future, winter camping.

I made one last trip back to Camp Wangoma at the end of the summer of 1974 to close things down. I know you all can find THOSE feelings like it was yesterday...a little sad...fall was in the air...the “sounds of a quiet camp”. Sleep tight Camp Wangoma...we will be back!

The summer of 1975 Camp Pine Crest and Camp Wangoma Outdoor Education Centre was fully booked. Over the winter, new cabins were built in the Pioneer field and Camp capacity was pushing 150.

Outdoor Education staff had been hired for both camps. Larry Bagnall the newly minted Assistant Camp Director of Camp Pine Crest was the Outdoor Education chief at Camp Wangoma. We were having a tough time recruiting staff for Camp Wangoma (everyone wanted Camp Pine Crest) so we set up a field trip. I will never forget the looks on people’s faces as we drove by the “Oasis Tavern” (Speedy Marshall proprietor). Bancroft in those days wasn’t like Bala...it was a dry town and it was 35 miles away from the camp. Hitting McArthur’s Mills and turning onto the Hartsmere Road...farming country, not cottage country. Even me explaining that the little house on the right “The Bakery” had the most amazing pies...no smiles.

Long Lake Cemetery sign, in the gate, past the barn...no smiles. We parked the vans and the entire group walked down to the waterfront. To say that they were stunned was an understatement. Camp Pine Crest is beautiful but Camp Wangoma is a paradise. As we walked around the camp, I think what really struck the group was the intimacy of the camp. You could be in the Pioneer Section or the Frontier Section and you felt you were in the middle of the action.

The staff on this field trip were SOLD!

Prior to this adventure, I had recruited some friends I had met through the OCA and Canoe School. Joanna from Kandalore, Ginny from Oconto, Hugh from Ahmek, John from Onondoga and now, a VERY enthusiastic crew from Camp Pine Crest.

I went to the Camp Wangoma staff orientation and much of that long weekend was about learning Camp Wangoma Traditions-even the camp song (Adapted to coed audience “We are the “team” from Wangoma”. We did a very quick ½ day paddle around the circuit... Their surprise of putting their paddles into Limestone Lake and the sheer seclusion– fantastic!

All of Camp Wangoma Outdoor Education Staff recognized that although they brought traditions and skills from their camps, the Camp Wangoma property and all of those that had gone before must be respected. They worked to make sure Camp Wangoma was Camp Wangoma. When I think of this group of people almost 50 years later, my eyes well up. They “done us proud”!

I worked at Camp Pine Crest that summer (simple twist of fate) but my first trip back to Camp Wangoma was the middle of May. I can't begin to tell you what it was like to have our camp full of kids. I never had that experience. The dining hall ROCKED and the evening campfire on Pine Hill was extraordinary. There were two teachers that played the guitar and I'm sure you could hear the singing over at Caverly's Landing!

Here were a bunch of staff from the four corners of the Camping world who had been assimilated into the Spirit of Camp Wangoma. This certainly extended when Staff from Camp Pine Crest returned to Camp Pine Crest for their summer duties wearing Camp Wangoma T-Shirts as a badge of honour. Let's not forget the singing of the Camp Wangoma song in the Camp Pine Crest Dining Hall in the first period for the "Pine Crest – Wangoma Games". The Camp was divided in two for a full day of events. I honestly can't remember who won...but geez... the Camp Wangoma song was way more catching than "far away from the crowded cities". The meaning of Wangoma, "adopt you as a brother" – it had happened right before my eyes and I shall be forever grateful.

CEDAR RIDGE CAMP AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

By Grayson Burke – Camp Director

In the fall of 2005, I was finishing my final season at Kilcoo Camp. After 8 years on staff at Kilcoo, I wasn't ready to leave camping. However, I had heard a lot about a realm beyond the gates – a place called "The Real World." Almost every camper and staff member eventually, joins it. I loved my role at Kilcoo, but was never able to transition that role to a full-time position and needed to see what this "Real World" was all about.

Not long after I arrived home in October, I got a call from Peter Ruy de Perez. A few years back, Peter had taken a job at Kilcoo to get reacclimatized to the camping world and prepare to one day start a camp of his own. More than once – typically at the Rock Cliff Bar in Minden. Peter had told me about his dream and I, of course offered my services. Peter started the conversation by saying "I hear you want to be a Camp Director?" He asked me to accompany him to check out a camp which was for sale in McArthur's Mills. My first question, "Where is McArthur's Mills?" I agreed to help.

Peter, Kelley (Peter's Wife) and I arrived to the site of Camp Wangoma for the first time on a rainy day in November 2005. Upon arrival, we met Rob Hemming. Rob had a long history in camping with the YMCA and Bark Lake. He later became a real estate agent specializing in the sales of camps and resorts. Although the property has some obvious signs of neglect, the beauty of the site hit instantly. The layout of the camp was perfect and the feel of Lake Wanamaker was so calm and refreshing. It was apparent that when the YMCA designed this site in 1956, they did it right. All that was needed was some time and passion to restore the camp. And of course, a little money. We spent the trip home talking about the incredible potential of the property and how this was a site like no other. Peter purchased the site on December 22, 2005. I signed on as Director. So, started this amazing adventure!

The sale of the site happened so quickly that we had little time to research the history of the property. We knew it had recently operated as a Christian Camp called Nature Land. It was once operated by East York Y and the Toronto Y Camping Services. But not much else was known. Our first task was to rid the site of all the garbage/junk and trailers that had accumulated over the years. As we sorted through the rubble, we started discovering pieces of Camp Wangoma. From archives in the office, the postcard, to overgrown campfire pits, the history of Camp Wangoma started to reveal itself. Curious about this mysterious camp, Peter tracked down Ivan Robinson by setting up a meeting in Toronto. Ivan gave Peter a great Camp Wangoma history lesson. We were pleased to see the similarities between Camp Wangoma and the vision we had for Cedar Ridge.

In the months to follow, we started to connect with the Camp Wangoma Alumni. Alf was the first to set-up an initial visit. First, we looked at a topographical map together. Alf pointed out all the opportunities for exploration that surrounded the property. From the circuit portages, the hike to the cliffs and the jumping cliffs on Weslemakoon Lake, our programs were immediately expanded. Slowly more Camp Wangoma Alumni started to trickle in, each sharing their Camp experience and strong connection to Camp Wangoma and the site. The first Camp Wangoma reunion at Cedar Ridge Camp provided an incredible opportunity to see the gang back in action. Through all the discussions, stories and guitar sessions, it was great to see the strong friendship and memories that have been maintained throughout the years.

Camp Wangoma has had a huge impact in our short time at Cedar Ridge Camp. We have loved the summer visits, when the campers get to hear stories and learn more about the history of camping on this site. From Rob Cook singing songs at campfire and our reflections, Alf running sessions for our staff during pre-camp and Doc sharing his deep passion for Camp. We have appreciated the golf invites to the Camp Wangoma Annual Golf Tournament. Maybe one day we'll have a Cedar Ridge staff on the plaque in the Dining Hall.

In 2022, we will be going into our sixteenth year as Cedar Ridge Camp and Outdoor Centre. In comparison to other Camps in Ontario, we are quite young. However, thanks to all the Camp Wangoma Alumni, we feel like Cedar Ridge didn't start in 2006, but is carrying on a tradition of camping, which was started by Camp Wangoma in 1956. This is a tradition that we are so thankful for and grateful to continue.

Thank you to all the Camp Wangoma Alumni for your support and friendship.

Grayson Burke - Camp Director
Cedar Ridge Camp/Outdoor Education Centre

Grayson is an amazing Camp Director at Cedar Ridge Camp! When Camp Wangoma Campers or Staff visit Cedar Ridge Camp they have always been most welcomed! Cedar Ridge Staff at camp have always been involved with our Alumni Reunions, Golf Tournaments and some of our Special Events. Cedar Ridge Camp (Grayson) covered the cost to have the Camp Wangoma Canoe recanvased. We are very fortunate to be able to help support Cedar Ridge

Camp and Outdoor Education Centre, share the friendship of the Camp and feel welcomed back to a place that has meant a lot to former Camp Wangoma Campers and Staff.

REFLECTION

One of my favourite reflections in working with campers and camp staff that I feel is appropriate at this time.

YOU NEVER KNOW

Someone may catch a dream from you.
You never know when a little word
Or something you may do
May open up the window
Of a mind that seeks the light,
The way you live may not matter at all
But you never know – it might.

And just in case it could be
That another's life, through you
Might possibly change for the better,
With a broader and brighter view,
It seems it might be worth a try
At pointing the way to what's right,
Of course, it may not matter at all,
But then again – it might.

International Rotary Club – 1905

**BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE FOR TAKING THE TIME TO SHARE AND READ
WANGOMATTERS – 50 YEARS LATER – Before the Memories Fade! It has been a great trip
down memory lane of Camp Wangoma!**

BE WELL! HAVE A 110 PER CENT DAY! LIVE YOUR DREAMS!

Alf Grigg CPF, RDMR
Honorary Life Member of the Ontario Camps Association
Society of Camp Directors
Recipient of the Ontario Camps Association Dorothy Walter Award of Excellence