



# Alumni Newsletter

SEPT. 13 - 14, 2014

## GET READY. . . JOHN ISLAND'S 60<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

In 1954 the Toronto Maple Leafs had their longest undefeated streak (18 games). . . M & M's were created. . . Roger Bannister ran the first 4 minute mile. . . and John Island Camp opened its doors to boys and girls from Northern Ontario for the first time. In the 60 years to follow, the camp has become a Northern Ontario institution – an overnight adventure for thousands of youth now serving a third generation.

It has been 60 years and it is time to celebrate. On Saturday, September 13, 2014 we will have a party to bring together camp alumni and friends of the camp from the past 6 decades. It will be a time to renew acquaintances made on the magical island; to recall stories of happy times and unbelievable adventures; to bring back some of the memories that have influenced our lives in immeasurable ways. It will also be a time to see how the camp has undergone a major rebuilding program while still retaining its original character.

The date and location are confirmed. Official events take place on Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm at the Howard Johnson on Brady St. in Sudbury. The evening will start with a dinner and an opportunity to meet up with others. A number of special events, fun and a dance reflecting the decades of passing time that John Island has shared with well over 1,000 alumni since 1954 are planned.

On Sunday, the camp will be welcoming alumni on the island to just wander around the facility or to go on tours with some of our current staff that will be able to explain the upgrades and share a bit of what camp life is like today. Camp boats will be travelling to camp and back to our Walkhouse Bay docks throughout Sunday. We will have lunch available, the swimming area will be in operation, and you will be able to take a canoe or kayak out in the back bay for a paddle.

While the Saturday evening party at the Howard Johnson is an event for those 19 years and over, the visit to



This 60th Anniversary Reunion Logo

the camp on Sunday is open to all alumni and their children of all ages.

There will be lots of opportunity for alumni to help with the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. If you are interested in getting involved, let us know by sending an e-mail to us at [pete.kerigan@sudbury.ymca.ca](mailto:pete.kerigan@sudbury.ymca.ca) to indicate your interest and what type of help you might be interested in offering.

More information will be forthcoming through the months ahead. Follow the news on the new John Island Camp Website by following the Alumni prompts.

See you on September 13<sup>th</sup>!

*Visit the 60th Anniversary Facebook Page*  
[www.facebook.com/JIC60](http://www.facebook.com/JIC60)

### INSIDE . . .

In this issue, we are highlighting articles and comments from John Islanders past and present. An underlining feeling that comes through is that of John Island being home to so many. The reasons are different but the feelings are very strong why the camp has had such a strong influence on campers and staff.

As we prepare for our 60th Anniversary, it is important to look back and to look ahead. Although the camp has changed with the times, the basic values around which the camp was built still hold strong. As alumni, we can help insure that those same values hold true for years to come.

**A SUMMER AT JOHN ISLAND CAMP AND CAMP FALCONA****MY FIRST ADVENTURE OUTSIDE EGYPT**

My name is Beshoy. I was born in 20th November 1983 in big city in upper-Egypt called, Asuit. I was graduate from Faculty of Social Work 2007 – Asuit University, Egypt. I was team leader with 29 social worker in our graduate project about, street kids phenomenon, in Egypt specially in Asuit.

I started my career with national association in Egypt called Caritas-Egypt. I worked for them for three years, as a social worker. I have worked with street kids and children in risk. I was responsible alone to make fun, integration programs and take care of twenty of street kids in Caritas shelter. After, Caritas I worked with the Egyptian Association for Societal Consolidation as a Social worker with the same program “street kids” but, this time in a Day Center. At this time I realized that I didn’t upgrade my qualification since my graduation. Then I decided to study English language to immigrate to Australia, there I can work in my field with more opportunity to know more about other cultures and to gain good salary too. Because, in Egypt I work hard for peanuts. Now I work with UNICEF Egypt in one of programs call “Outreach” form year until now.

Let me describe more about what I do in Egypt. Since 2005 I was member with YMCA Assiut-Egypt, and I was interested to learn and help to improve myself. I had lots of experiences with YMCA in leadership programs, environment camps and summer camps with several of YMCAs branches. On the other hand, outside YMCA, as a social worker I’m one of 13 social workers work for UNICEF team. Our target is finding any kid in the street aged between days to 18 years old from both genders. We provide awareness about HIV, the dangers could be facing it in streets and train them about first aid. We play with them some games, through this games we can teach them lots of values like respectful, honest, the means of friendship and team work etc. we do all this to make indirect invitation to let them come to UNICEF’s network associations, this network include three association funded by UNICEF. In our associations we do lots of programs to integrate them to the homes and society once again and rehabilitations programs. We provide camps, illiteracy Schools, art and crafts also workshops to let them get skills this skills could let them use it as a work in the future. We provide our services in the great Cairo that means Giza, Cairo and Dakahlia governorates. Our work in main squares and important places like Tahrir Square and Ramses Square etc.

JOHN ISLAND CAMP & CAMP FALCONA, I was so lucky to meet both of amazing staff there. I learned lots about cultures, hobbies and the most important to me a new activities and skills that they do in JIC and Camp Falcona, to try to apply some of this games in my work with street kids in Egypt. I can say that the staff there does all the best to create smile on the kids face's with fun. Beside all this they teach them some of values like respectful, thankful and how can make new friends with unforgettable memories and amazing experiences in short time. I can confess that John Island camp is like heaven!! There you can find the green and sands, swim in fresh water, luxury, fun, sports, smile, laugh and songs everywhere. Kids like angels and all the team were very kind even more than the children parents in some times. all the team very accuracy and careful about safety in all games including kayaking and canoeing out-trip camps.

That was my first experience outside Egypt, I got lots of experiences. It’s great to widen my information lens about other culture in my career field. I was so excited when I was hiking out and canoeing. Also I loved camp fire so much!! I have got new ideas about how I can deal with different situations with kids in other culture. Also to take some of ideas to create and apply new activities and games that I thought in art and activities and in the camp programs to make the camp the perfect place to create an amazing memories and funniest place on the earth. Also, to get new experiences and make new friends.

Finally, I would like to thank YMCA EGYPT and YMCA SUDBURY to allow me to participate with my Canadian friends to help kids and to provide a wonderful summer to all kids in both of John Island Camp and Camp Falcona. And I would love to live another adventure in Canada in youth exchange program with YMCA Sudbury again. But, this time as a counselor not just as a visitor. To allow me to help more kids, support myself more, my career and enhance my English Language too.

**Social worker & Coordinator**  
Beshoy B. Ghattas



Beshoy Ghattas from Cairo



Beshoy in Tahrir Square, Cairo during festive celebration

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS - MOVING US AHEAD

*Our partners in camping at John Island enrich the camp experience for staff and campers. We have enjoyed working with various groups across Ontario for years, and amongst those we have developed partnerships along the North Shore in many areas. Secondary School, Amatol and Sudbury Manitoulin Childrens' Foundation to mention a few. We will highlight one of our partners in each of the next few newsletters as they are all helping make John Island a better camp.*

### SONNENBURG'S RONA HARDWARE, MASSEY

It is not often that a retail hardware business could be considered a partner with a camp. However, Sonnenburg Rona Hardware store (originally in Spanish and recently moved to Massey) are exemplary partners with John Island Camp. When Chad Sonnenburg took over the ownership of the business from his father several years ago, he also assumed his father's philosophy that the business should pay back to the community and all the components of that community.

During John Island's recent rebuilding program, a consistently reliable hardware and lumber source was imperative. Not only has Chad and his staff provided what we needed, but at prices that could not be beat anywhere. In addition to being able to provide the products and prices we need, Chad has also been a major contributor to our capital campaign.

This is what Chad writes about the partnership: . . .

#### Giving Back

The partnership between Sonnenburg RONA Hardware and John Island Camp was forged approximately 10 years ago when the Sonnenburg family opened their RONA Hardware and Building Supply store in Spanish, a small town located on the North Shore. The bond began as a retailer/customer union but grew into a mutual partnership of support for youth in the Sudbury and North Shore communities.

Sonnenburg Hardware has always provided high quality building supplies to the camp and an even higher quality of customer service, ensuring product availability and delivery were of the utmost importance. Merchandise is delivered throughout the season to the docks where together, RONA and JIC staff, work to load and unload goods onto boats for trips to and from the camp.

Sonnenburg Hardware's owner, Chad Sonnenburg, has also supported John Island for several years with a substantial annual donation for the camp to use for whatever building supplies or renovation project they deem necessary. John Island is on the top of Chad's philanthropic list. As Chad says, "many of the staff have had children attend the camp or have gone to JIC themselves". Chad and his RONA family recognize JIC's ongoing contribution in fostering values, responsibility, appreciation of nature and good Citizenship to the kids who attend camp and those who continue on as counsellors and future managers and administrators for JIC. "It's such a worthwhile opportunity to give back", says Chad; one that he plans to support for many years to come.



Chad Sonnenburg and staff of the Massey Rona store.



**RONA**

## THE SPIRITUALITY OF CAMP

Like so many things, the “spirit” foundation of the YMCA is exhibited in changing ways at YMCA John Island Camp. Now we are not talking religion, but spirituality. Many believe that religion is man’s attempt to organize and understand spirituality. At camp, the true premise of spirituality comes naturally. After all, which is more important to most youth today – the experience of a spiritually based lifestyle or an understanding of our ancestors’ explanations of how our spiritual beliefs evolved? At camp we have the opportunity to strip away the sometimes cumbersome rituals and symbols of the past and deal with the present.

At camp, we are with persons who have an established or evolving value system that radiates through their daily lifestyle. The role-modeling by staff is powerful. The values that are part of our camp life at John Island are important as we all get to witness the values in practice and the effect of these values in our daily life....and the life of others.



“Reflections” service in the John Island chapel in 2013

Through the years, the approach to spirituality at John Island Camp has changed as we have so many lifestyles. In the 1950’s the Sunday morning chapel service was a regular program item and to this day many of us can hear Jack Smith singing “This is My Father’s World” as we sat on the chapel logs. There were bible readings and we even had our own John Island Hymn Book that would be passed out so we could all sing hymns. It was very symbolic of the times. The Catholic campers were taken to a Catholic service in Spanish. Jewish campers stayed back at the main camp as we had no special service for them. We were all urged to wear white clothing to chapel and told to sit quietly on the logs during the service.

Today there is no weekly religious chapel service. We have campers of more religious

backgrounds than ever before. Now we have a weekly “Reflections” program at the chapel. There are no hymns, but songs that relate to the theme of the program that day. The values of the camp are highlighted in short stories and quotations that most can relate to. Most of the “reflections” program is led by campers with support from counsellors and staff. The weekly program is fun and the campers are eager to participate as the camp’s stated values which include honesty, caring, respect and responsibility are key elements of the reflections service.

So what is the result of this evolving scope of spirituality at camp? John Island has become a place that campers and staff feel is their home. It is a safe place, a respectful place, a caring place. Camp is a living example of how we begin to understand ourselves and others as we are immersed in the beauty of a natural setting. It is where we experience living with diversity in an accepting and loving manner. It is where we experience that putting the needs of others ahead of our own is a rewarding way to live. It is where we learn that people from many different cultures and parts of the world hold the same values important that we do. ...and there is so much we can learn from each other.

Camp is where you will meet some of the most spiritually active people that you will ever meet. It is a spiritually rich environment where actions say far more than spoken words.

### CAMP DOGS OVER THE YEARS

Dogs and John Island have been a familiar pairing. We are planning on including an article in the fall newsletter about the various dogs that have graced camp and provided a number of benefits to the camp. We need your help. If you remember or had a dog at camp, please send us a few comments that we can add to the article. Send the information to [gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca](mailto:gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca)

### GETTING READY FOR THE 60th

Nothing helps tickle our memories of the past like photos and momentos of the great times we had at John Island Camp. If you have any items that would help yourself and others recall those times gone by, pull them out now and set them aside for the John Island 60 Anniversary Reunion on Sept. 13-14. Christmas holiday time would be a great time to go through your memorabilia.

# CAMP FRIENDSHIPS - A LIFELONG AFFAIR

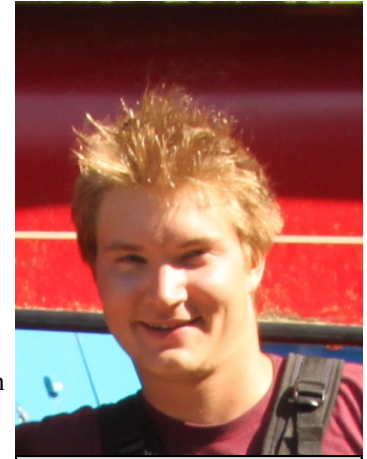
- Trevor Watt

(JIC 2000—2013)

I first stepped off the boat onto beautiful John Island during the annual “Visitors Day” in the lead up to the summer of 2000. I was nine years old and was accompanied by my parents, my six-year-old brother along with my best friend Nic Santi and his family who lived across the street from us in Sudbury. Nic would go on to spend each and every summer with me at John Island. From what I can recall, the main highlights of this initial trip at age nine for us were the boats, bunkbeds, and the ample supply of hotdogs (in that order..). This meaningful first impression would lead to Nic and I attending “Little Guys and Gals” that summer, beginning our strong commitment to the camp that continues to this day.

During the early years, it was activities like survival, sailing, and of course the infamous “all-for-one” that would provide for a fun, competitive environment while, often without even realizing, learning valuable life lessons along the way. Great memories that stick with me to this day include our first overnight on Ivy Point (where we had pizza for dinner over the fire), and racing to the cabin on the first day to secure a spot on the top bunk.

Seven years later, the leadership programs were now on the horizon, as Nic and I both chose to partake in the Program Norquay group of 2008. Since the age of nine it was undoubtedly true that our interests had changed. For instance at age 16, we now would race to secure a bottom bunk and if girls wished to talk to us, that was no longer a problem! With that being said, while being much older, the camp still remained very relevant. We would spend that summer training to become counselors through improving our hard skills by paddling down the Sturgeon River on our weeklong canoe trip, as well as shadowing staff in cabin placements. When reflecting on my progression through the camp, it is quite evident that the Norquay program played a profound role in my development at this stage in my life. Things like pushing myself to



Trevor Watt

play guitar at the campfire for the first time as a Norquay would go a long way in me gaining confidence as a musician moving forward. Looking back on it, the welcoming environment that the camp was able to provide for me as a young teenager through the Norquay program was exactly what I needed.



2013 Norquay |River Group Returning from Missinaibi Trip

bright for JIC as we had a tremendous, strongly motivated group of Norquays of whom we spent the summer with. It was quite fascinating to see them progress through the program, as it doesn't seem that long ago that we were at the same stage ourselves.

As I sit here today wondering what it is that makes John Island such a special place for myself and thousands of others alike who have strolled through the sand in flip-flops over the years, it is the rewarding experience that the camp can provide to not only kids attending JIC for the first time, but older staff members and alumni alike. While my life will continue to progress as a recent graduate of Dalhousie University in Political Science, John Island will remain to be a beautiful island on the North Channel of Lake Huron that appeals to all ages. It may be true that the boats are faster (did I mention that I finally got to drive them this year?!) and the cabins are newer but the camp is very much the same place that I saw on that first “Visitors Day” in 2000. For this reason, I imagine that John Island will continue to be a monumental part of my life moving forward. After having spent thirteen great summers on the island only hope that I can return once again next summer. When anyone with young kids asks me about the camp I always suggest attending “Visitors Day”. Grab a hotdog and take a ride in one of the boats. You may just like it!

## NOTES ABOUT PEOPLE AND EVENTS

From **Joanne Fraser (nee Clarke): Henry James Fraser** weighing a healthy 8 lb 15 ounces entered the world on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013 in the countryside outside of London, England. As his mum has always been one for the outdoors Henry already seems to love his walks and adventures in the green English farmland. In true JIC spirit we have booked flights back to Canada in both the depth of winter and the heart of summer to introduce him to snow, wind, sun and most importantly the lake! When he is older I hope to send him to JIC so he can experience all of the fun and adventure I experienced, plus, he will be the cool kid with the British accent!

Congratulations to **Ashley Machum and Greg Hutton** on their upcoming wedding this December! Wishing you a lifetime of happiness together!

Thanks to the many volunteers who took part in our **Spring Work Weekend** event this year. It was an exceptional group that was full of energy and commitment to get work done. Remember to keep the weekend of May 9—11 open for the John Island Work Weekend for 2014. Contact Pete Kerigan at [pete.kerigan@sudbury.ymca.ca](mailto:pete.kerigan@sudbury.ymca.ca) if you are interested in joining us for the weekend.

Registration for all **Leadership programs** at John Island 2014 begins on November 12, 2013—that's NOW!. On-line registrations now account for the majority of all camp registrations and are available on the John Island Camp website.

**John Island staff** again contributed an outstanding amount of \$5,000 to the **YMCA Strong Kids Campaign** which helps sponsor kids to camp every summer.

Here is a change that has occurred during John Island's history. In the 1950's and 1960's no one reported hearing about John Island Camp on the internet (web page). In 2013, 86% of survey respondents reported using the internet to learn about the camp and 74% reported reading the John Island Camp Facebook page.



Henry James Fraser—barely 2 months old

### BRIAN O'NEILL RECEIVES PRINT

## CAMP THANKS VOLUNTEER



Brian O'Neill received print from Pete Kerigan

Although Brian O'Neill is a practicing lawyer, he chooses a different career at this stage in his life. He is a builder - constructing log houses, renovating buildings and just about anything that challenges his well developed skills. Just as important, Brian is a John Island alumni and he cares about the work that the camp does with hundreds of youth every summer.

When Brian heard that the old craft shop at camp was in dire need of major repairs, he showed up at the camp and performed another bit of John Island magic by transforming the crumbling craft shop into a very solid, attractive and useful facility. The building now stands as the new John Island Leadership Centre with additional adequate space for an active craft program as well as a much needed space for the John Island Museum. You can see photos of the transformation on page 7 of this newsletter.

Pictured are Director of YMCA Camping Services, Pete Kerigan, as he presents Brian with a copy of the Bernie Poulin print of the John Island dining hall. Brian volunteered two full weeks this past spring and not only managed to get the job done, but was able to use most of the spring staff from time to time to help with the daunting task.

Volunteers have been critical to the rebuilding of John Island just as they were during the construction of the original camp in the early 1950's. The majority of the recent \$1 million upgrade was performed by volunteers.

# JOHN ISLAND SPURS LIFELONG TRIPPING ITCH

- Matthew Perpick (JIC 1988—92)

It's October. Fall is here and winter is coming. This means my phone will ring soon. I don't know who exactly it'll be - maybe Sean Lougheed or Turbo or Dave Hartman - but I know what I'll hear when I pick up the phone. "Where we goin' paddling this summer?" The next months will be spent hunched over maps of the bush, scrounging canoes from old friends and scheming escape routes from work and partners and life. I'll try to explain it all to people here in New York. That we'll try to paddle a thousand kilometres to Hudson Bay, that we'll live for a month in the bush, but all they hear is madness. "What about the bugs? Why don't you just go to Europe," they ask. But tell a friend from John Island that we're going out on the river and there's no need to explain a thing. They understand.

We started doing these trips in 2009, when Sean Lougheed assembled a ragtag crew of John Island alumni to paddle from Labrador to the St. Lawrence on the wild Moisie River. There we brushed death in the cataracts of Trestle Rapids and celebrated our survival with the finest spam dinner in the history of humankind.

We were Manitoba bound the next summer and paddled an old Norquay route, Leaf Rapids to Churchill on the Seal River. The Seal is an animal lover's paradise, and we were treated to all manner of fauna in the forest and the tundra - seals, whales, polar bears and even one Brian O'Neill. A sight to see.

The next season a terrible thing called work took over my life and I was stuck in the city. Ryan 'Turbo' Forsyth, Brian and Amy Winterhalt kept the tradition alive and paddled the Bloodvein River from Ontario to Red Lake to Winnipeg. With the canoes rigged into a marvellous craft known as the HMS Antelope, they recorded a 70km sailing day on big Lake Winnipeg. Though I missed that one, Tony Higgins and I were lucky enough to get away in the fall on a weeklong portaging trip in Temagami. We even had the occasional chance to paddle the canoe as well. Thanks for suggesting the route, Sean. In 2012, we undertook our most difficult expedition, a 1200km slog that crosses three watersheds from Pickle Lake to Fort Severn. Simply put, it was a very difficult trip and it pushed the limits of our bodies, minds and will. Ryan, Dave Hartman, Adam Biehler and I documented the journey in a movie called 'Nine Rivers'. It's free on the internet so please check it out.

We owe all of these trips to John Island. It made us. We fell in love with nature below the wash of stars on Front Beach and honed our J strokes on the Kwai. We found our spirit of adventure on midnight hikes to Lost Lake, in sailboats that fill with wind and fly when they break past the lee of Ivy Island. We learned the ways of wilderness travel on overnight hikes to First Beach as Junior campers to the thirty day river expeditions as Norquays. Our greatest friendships were cemented singing songs at campfires, playing cards, jumping from the roof of the Earl M into the North Channel on the last boat ride of the summer.

To steal a line from Roch Carrier, as children we live in two places: John Island and everywhere else. To my friends, it was truly everything, it was our real life and we were either on John Island or waiting to go back. I've never had another experience that was so wholly encompassing, transformative and incredible. I'm in New York City right now. It's a fine place, but what I wouldn't give to be back on the island, sitting on the dining hall porch, with the smell of pine needles everywhere and surrounded by my best friends in the world.

The young people who get to call John Island home for a summer or two are very lucky. It's a precious gift. I'm very thankful for all the people who have worked to make the Island such a magical place decade after decade.



Matt Perpick



Northern rivers provide for never ending beauty

***Here's the complete list of John Island alumni who have journeyed with 'Norquay Group C': Ryan Forsyth, Matt Perpick, Sean Lougheed, Dave Hartman, Marty Pomerleau, Colin Veevers, Tony Higgins, Amy Winterhalt and Alexie Merk.***  
***To see more photos of the journeys, go to: [shiningtree.tumblr.com/tagged/canoeing](http://shiningtree.tumblr.com/tagged/canoeing).***  
***To see the Nine Rivers movie, go to [ninerivers.ca](http://ninerivers.ca)***

Donations are always welcome at John Island. Donations help sponsor children in camp, help award bursaries to staff, and help keep our camp buildings in quality shape.  
 See the back page for the camp contact information.

**SENIOR CABIN (EAGLE-TALON) AND CRAFT SHOP MAJOR PROJECTS**

**CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS FORGE AHEAD**

Students from Lasalle Secondary School did it. Rotary Club members did it. Spring Work Party participants did it. In fact, a cornucopia of volunteers from many backgrounds worked throughout the spring to virtually rebuild what some of us remember as the senior cabin and others know as Eagle-Talon.

Under the watchful eye of contractor Murray Low, the work started with the students of Lasalle Secondary School in Sudbury spending 3 weeks honing their carpentry skills by installing new windows, new walls, new floor boards and starting the construction of new bunk beds.

Volunteers during the Spring Work Party and later from the Sudbury Rotary Club worked at strapping the front for new boards, working on the porch railings, and some detailed work inside. Add to this the Amatol group who came and rebuilt the front wall of the common room, installed the common room windows and completed the panelling in the common room.

With a little finishing work by Murray, we ended the spring with a very attractive, functional and good as new cabin. Thanks to all of the volunteers who made this project possible and to the Rotary Club who not only volunteered a week-end but financed much of the cost of the materials for the project.

The other major project undertaken this past spring was a major rebuilding of the craft shop. The original craft shop was used in 1954 with only the floor in place and a large tent to complete the structure. Two years later the walls and roof were added to complete the building.

After close to 60 years of use, the building was leaking badly, the roof had a noticeable dip in the middle, the floor was not adequately supported and much of the building was just plain falling apart. Thanks to two alumni, one providing 2 weeks of professional construction time and the other the financing for materials, the well worn craft shop was converted to an attractive leadership centre with a craft shop and museum included.

Brian O'Neill, a John Island Alumni currently in the construction business, braced the floor with new or repaired beams, strengthened and straightened the roof (including installing a new steel roof), panelled the north side of the building (now the new Leadership Centre), painted the ceiling of the Leadership Centre, put new window trimming and screening on all windows, installed new doors and shutters, and put three coats of paint on the outside. New electric wiring was done by volunteer electrician Ken Brims who also worked with AI Will on a third new project.

This third project is the refurbishing of the original staff cabin (more recently known as the out-tripping building). AI and Ken worked this spring to get started on converting this building back to a staff cabin by installing all new windows and stripping out the old ceiling. Ken also rewired this building and put in new lighting fixtures. The future will see work on this building completed.

Thanks to all volunteers and spring camp staff who worked diligently on all of these projects as we continue to improve the camp facilities.



Senior Cabin (Eagle-Talon) as rebuild starts with students from Lasalle Secondary



Newly rebuilt cabin



Craft Shop before the renovations began



Renovations complete as a new Leadership Centre takes shape



Ken Brims removing old light fixtures in the out-trip shed and AI Will discussing the installation of new windows in building.



## CAMP IS “HOME” — STAFF SPEAK OUT

We asked our 2013 camp staff if they would like to make a few comments about their camp experience and why camp has been so important to them. Over a third of the 55 staff responded. We do not have enough room for all of their comments, but a common thread implies that in this changing world John Island is one stable force in their life. It is home. Enjoy these few

### John Island is Home

At the age of six, my mom dropped me off at Lily Creek and even though I was sobbing as we left the parking lot bobbing along in the yellow school buses, John Island turned into a magical place for me. Since that moment, I haven't looked back. As the child of a diplomat, I have lived in 6 different countries but every summer I always looked forward to my adventures at John Island. I don't really have a “home”. John Island is the only constant I've had in my life other than my wonderful mother. While my friends across the world do not understand my fascination with a place that they thought was a part of my imagination, I would anticipate the summer waiting impatiently to return.

I feel as though I have grown up at John Island. It has seen me through happy summers and transitional summers when we moved from country to country. The staff at John Island taught me lessons about respect and honesty; two core values that will lead me throughout my life. I have also learned how to be responsible and what it means to be part of a team. As a child, I learned something as simple as how to clear a table at camp and how to support my cabin mates while doing a high rope element.

My fellow cabin mates, leadership “minions”, and staff members are my extended family. All of these people are my best friends. I am certain they will always be part of my life. This summer while counseling senior girls, I was reminded of myself as a camper. At times I wanted to tear my hair out during the session, but watching these fabulous girls bond and knowing they would do anything for each other made me proud. These campers come together every year from all across Ontario - one camper from as far away as Shanghai. Next year, some of them will be attending Greenways and some will return as senior campers. They will remain friends with a special bond. I know it. John Island has that effect on you.

Thirteen years have passed since my “Little Gals and Guys” session at John Island and I'm still not over it. I tear up when I think of John Island during the year. My stomach is in knots for weeks with anticipation before a summer session. Next year will be my fourteenth year and while my friends from high school and university will get “real” jobs - I want to stay at camp for as long as possible. No matter what, I know that my children will have the opportunity to attend John Island: a place that really matters.

- Helena Wade

Its really hard to explain what John Island means to me. I guess the best way is to simply say it's home. I feel like I am the best version of myself when I am at camp, and I am ridiculously lucky to have met so many of my best friends there. To people that haven't experienced it themselves, it's hard to explain. It is just so incredible.

- Neve Adams

Working at John Island has been such an amazing experience. I have learned so many things about myself and have built so many genuine friendships that really will last a lifetime. What John Island means to me is really difficult to express in writing. John Island is where I grew up; it is where I had some of the most memorable moments of my life. Working at John Island is one of the most difficult and the most rewarding jobs I have had.

- Natalie Townsend

John Island Camp has been my home away from home for the past eleven summers. I have met some of my best friends there and had the most life changing experiences such as my Norquay trip and counselling. I can't imagine spending summers any other way.

- Clare Dolan

...I knew that I wanted to be a team player, someone who was confident in who they were, and someone that created positive change. While trying to become just that, John Island was a place where I learned to live, communicate, and teach with a small group of people and slowly changing and growing while I was doing so. Many of my life lessons were learned on beaches or in cabins at camp and have shown me how to problem solve and work through issues. As much as I am thankful for the many things that attending and working at John Island has taught me, it also gave me the opportunity to build amazing friendships and work along side some of the best people I've ever known.

- Ava Loiskandl

**See next page for more comments from staff from years past**

## STAFF FROM ALL ERAS CREDIT CAMP EXPERIENCE

*We have just seen on the previous page that today's staff see the John Island experience as a major influence in developing their values, their skills and their understanding of themselves. When we reviewed comments made in the Alumni Newsletter by staff from earlier years it is evident that things really have not changed. Here is what some staff have said in earlier newsletters.....*

"I met and worked cooperatively with people from all walks of life all those summers at JIC—an experience that was invaluable. It was a fun, safe environment that fostered acceptance and it taught us about being part of a community."

- Marg Ghent (from Spring 2003 Newsletter)

"All this to say that JIC has played a major role in shaping our children into who they are and what they stand for as adults today. Fortunately the values espoused by the leaders there happened to be the family values Fritz and I were trying to engender in our home."

- Louise Grottoli (from Spring 2010 newsletter)

"How did your experience at John Island Camp affect you?" - When this question was posed to me this year, I thought for a moment and decided that mostly it created great memories; memories upon which I have built belief systems that I use in my daily life. Although it was twenty-six years ago (1977) that I first spent a summer at JIC as a counsellor, these memories are vivid."

- Brian Jones (from Fall 2003 newsletter)

"... JIC gave me a heightened appreciation for nature, people and all the unique contributions that each of us has to offer. It reaffirmed that a full life includes being open to opportunities, taking risks, doing your best, acknowledging your mistakes, learning from experience; and endeavouring to grow and share with your community, whatever or wherever it may be."

- Sue MacCrae (from Winter 2004 newsletter)

"My brothers and I went from campers to counsellors at John Island over a period of 7 years. Our time there and the YMCA teachings truly shaped us for the years that followed. In our respective careers in university administration, secondary school teaching, and for myself law and public administration, the Y foundations of Spirit, Mind and Body became such a part of how we lived our lives."

- Ian Glen (from Winter 2004 Newsletter)

The John Island Camp Alumni Newsletter is available 3 ways:

1. On the internet
2. By e-mail
3. Printed and mailed

**WE NEED TO KNOW YOUR PREFERENCE(S)**

Send us an e-mail to: [gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca](mailto:gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca)

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We all know that camp friendships last a lifetime.

However, time can separate us and send us to unknown addresses and even distant countries.

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

You can contact us at: [gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca](mailto:gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca)



#### YMCA SUDBURY CAMPING SERVICE

140 Durham Street, Sudbury, ON, P3E 3M  
705-673-9136 705-674-6171 (Camping Office)  
1-800-465-9622 (Toll-Free) 705-675-8777 (Fax)  
[www.sudbury.ymca.ca](http://www.sudbury.ymca.ca)      [www.johnisland.ymca.ca](http://www.johnisland.ymca.ca)

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