

OCAsional News

Published by the Ontario Camping Association

November 1997

1810 Avenue Road, Suite 302, Toronto, Ontario M5M 3Z2
Ph: 416-781-0525 Fax: 416-781-7875 e-mail: oca@ontcamp.on.ca

We Are Not Alone

The call came at 4:20 am. By 4:25 my husband was in his truck racing to Opeongo Store to try to support the boy who'd been attacked by the bear. By 4:30 the camp doctor was in my cabin, and we were on the phone to the Barry's Bay Hospital to start managing the medical care. At 4:44 I started calling the Superintendent of Algonquin Park to ask for help getting all of our other trips out of the interior of Algonquin.

A camp director's worst fear, before something bad happens, is how it will feel. The nightmare that awakens us at 3:00 am in June is a straightforward emotional response to fear. But the reality was very different from the anticipation. I knew from the moment of the phone call that my job was to stay very calm and to support everybody else through the crisis (what else is new?). For the next four days of intense trauma, there was no time to feel, only to *do*.

What did we do? We called the child's parents right away and got them hooked up with the doctor in Barry's Bay, where the child was taken by ambulance. We managed the medical support so as to get him the best and most geographically appropriate place for treatment. We sent our tripper in the ambulance with the boy, with a cell phone so he could speak often with his parents during the long drive from Barry's Bay home to Montreal. We arranged for every single Arowhon trip to be airlifted out of the interior, so we could assure our camper families of their children's safety.

That morning, we phoned our lawyer, insurance company, the OCA, and other Algonquin camps. Right away I wrote (and had edited by the lawyer) a statement for press and parents. We posted the statement at every office phone, and made a policy that only I could talk to the press. We asked

our friends at Camp Tamakwa to fax the statement to all the other Algonquin camps.

What do you tell your campers? Everything. At lunchtime I told the assembled campers the whole story, and answered all their questions. For half an hour you could have heard a pin drop in our usually chaotic dining hall. I think that frankness, and full info, gave them some comfort. As the situation unfolded, we kept them up-to-date and fully informed of the boy's progress.

For the next four days we were deluged with phone calls from the press. I spoke to them from my prepared statement and notes, and I kept interviews as brief as possible. They hounded me to let them interview the counsellor and tripper who had saved the boy from the bear. I made a hard decision: that the well-being of those two young people, the campers they were still working with, and our camp, would be ill-served by journalists being around. So I said no to all those demands, and dealt with the pressure to give in. It was relentless.

Within hours of the attack, calls began pouring in from Arowhon alumni offering help. Over the next five days, we had visits from four of them, all professional counsellors who gave trauma counselling to the kids and staff who'd been on the trip in question. The management of the camp also had sessions with the counsellors. All the kids from the trip spoke often with their parents, as did I. Reassurance was very important in the aftermath.

We are deeply grateful that the boy who was hurt (I protect his privacy and that of his family by not sharing his name here) is making a full recovery. When his mom told me on the phone in late

September that he was playing soccer, my heart soared.

For second session, we had another tough decision to make: Do we continue our policy of compulsory canoe tripping? We decided that even though the facts are that the Algonquin interior is a substantially safer place for children than Toronto (and this one isolated attack doesn't change that safety), the children's feelings of fear have reality too, and ought to be attended to. We knew it wouldn't be forever, and that fears do fade with time; so we decided to make tripping optional second session. I was delighted that 23 trips nonetheless went out from our camp during the second session.

If I think back on the accident, and reflect on what I learned from it, there are two key lessons. One is that all the effort we put into finding, choosing and training staff can pay off in a three minute emergency: our tripper and counsellor risked their own safety to protect their campers. They knew what to do and when to do it, and in their hearts they found the personal generosity to act on their camper's behalf, whatever that took.

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"That which is static and repetitive is boring. That which is dynamic and random is confusing. In between lies art." – John A. Locke

From Barb's Laptop

Change is What We Make of it

Every day we are reminded that we live in a fast changing world. Everything seems bigger, faster, more complicated and more powerful: everything, even attitudes and behaviour, seem to be obsolete tomorrow as the new improved versions emerge. People of my parents' generation affirm that, although they have lived through a multitude of changes in their lifetime, significant changes seem to come daily in the 1990s.

Some changes are close to camp: a cabin burns down, a condo development starts on the lake, the park is not available for games, it rains every single day; key staff cannot return, a parent expects instant communication. As camping professionals we all know that we deal with situations like these, striving to turn each change from a potential disaster into a way of improving our camp. But camp is part of the wider world too.

Futurists point to numerous challenges that society and, therefore, camps must meet. Changing demographics, economic factors, environmental considerations, multiculturalism, technological advances, health care, societal expectations, education—the list goes on and on. We all experience the constant change in federal, provincial and municipal government regulations. The number of laws, rules and regulations and their complexity increases with every new government announcement.

Facing a rapidly changing world, it is reassuring to hear a young person remind us that "change is what we make of it" (Matt Chellew, Head Student at Lakefield College School in his Closing Address, June 14, 1997).

It is also reassuring to know that in the midst of the changes that come, we can keep the core of values that make camp special

Things to Do

- Learn about new possibilities for our web site
- Prepare for AGM in London
- Install hearth and woodstove
- Welcome new members
- Encourage members to consider running for the Board or joining a committee

Barb Gilbert
President

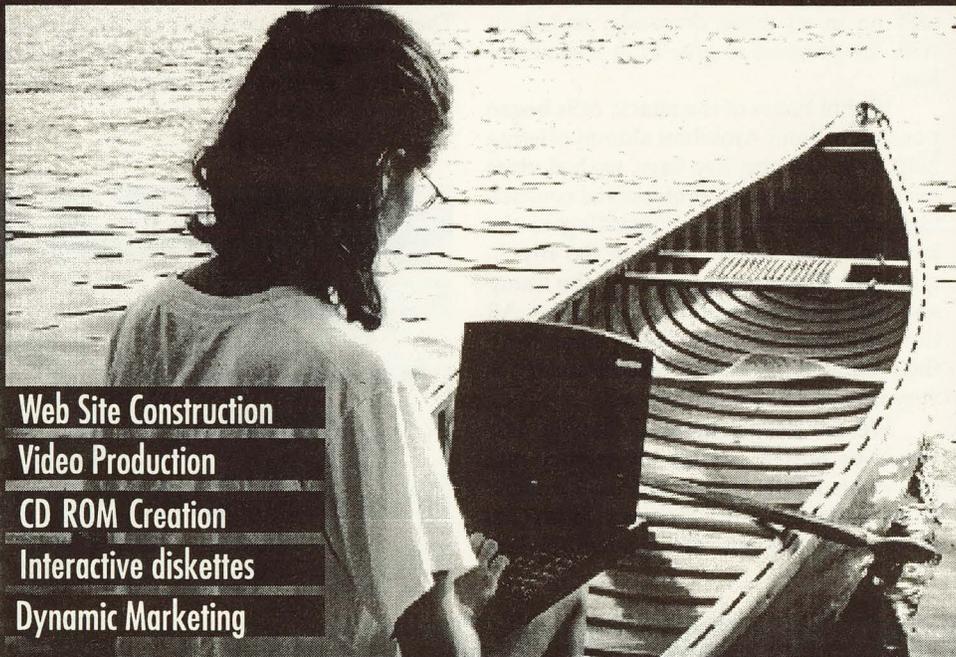
Not Alone

continued from page 1

My second lesson comes from the outpouring of support from the Arowhon community: alumni, camper parents, the kids themselves, other camps—everyone was on our side and willing to help. Even though it often feels that way, we are not alone.

Joanne Kates
Director
Camp Arowhon

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Editor's Note

I recently spent two weeks in the heart of British Columbia's Okanagan Valley, visiting my parents. Besides enjoying my stay with my folks, I found so many other things a delight. The local paper put a positive slant on every news article and often featured local youth who had accomplished something—anything—on the front page. The spontaneous friendliness of the people was a refreshing revelation, as was the unwavering graciousness of anyone connected with the service industry. It never failed to surprise me how courteous cashiers and sales clerks are out there!

Coming back to Ontario was like having cold water splashed in my face: when I went to the supermarket, the check-out clerk didn't glance once in my direction, grunted when I said "good morning," and was as silent as the grave when I handed

over payment. This is not unusual in Toronto, but after a two-week respite, it still came as a shock.

Journalists and researchers are fond of telling us how the service industry will grow at an alarming rate over the next decade. It seems to me that all young people could benefit from a stint of working at a children's summer camp. There they will—hopefully—learn to appreciate diversity, have the chance to interact with all sorts of people, parents included, and begin to understand the elemental concepts of the phrase "customer service."

While we're at it, let's send most of Toronto's sales clerks to camp for a summer too. Maybe it'll make them more cheerful!

Fiora Hawryluk

Camping Makes the World Go Around

Wow!! Nevsky Forum 1997, The Fourth International Camping Congress, was an amazing experience. The Russian Steering Committee created a superb event. With incredible support from the Russian Federal Government and from the City of St. Petersburg's municipal government, over 700 delegates from 24 countries were treated to police escorts for our 14-bus entourage, a private viewing of the fountains and grounds of the summer palace of Peter The Great, a concert by children that was simply magnificent, a tour of a children's palace where 15,000 children meet in clubs after school and on weekends, and meals that were fantastic.

In every way, it was a wonderful, positive, heartwarming congress that led to increased excitement for Japan 2000, The Fifth International Camping Congress. I wish to thank the 29 Canadian delegates who represented us in Russia—I know that each of us returned with a renewed commitment to this profession we call camping. Camping is alive and well around the world!

Elections and appointments for the Steering Committee of The International Camping Fellowship were conducted during the last few weeks and I am pleased to announce that four Canadians are now actively involved. Jack Pearse of Camp Tawingo was elected Chair of the ICF. Jeff Bradshaw, Director of Camp Wenonah, was appointed Canadian Representative. John Jorgenson and Jane McCutcheon of Camp Tawingo were appointed Secretary/Newsletter Editor and Treasurer, respectively. We serve on the Committee until the year 2000.

It is my pleasure to turn this monthly column over to Jeff Bradshaw, who will keep you abreast of ICF's progress, as well as camp happenings worldwide. I hope you will consider joining ICF—together we can continue to make a difference in the lives of children around the world.

Jane McCutcheon
Treasurer
International Camping Fellowship

OCA Board Members

President: Barb Gilbert
R.R.#4, Brighton, ON K0K 1H0
H: 613-475-1689 Fax: 613-475-2938

Vice President: Bob Smith
142 Hillhurst Blvd., Toronto, ON M5N 1N8
H: 416-483-8346 Fax: 416-483-2113
e-mail: bobsmith@pathcom.com
Portfolio: Regional Representatives

Past President: John Jorgenson, Camp Tawingo
R.R.#1, Huntsville, ON P0A 1K0
H: 705-789-8701 B: 705-789-5612 Fax: 705-789-6624
e-mail: tawingo@vianet.on.ca
Portfolio: Human Resources

Treasurer: Marj Booth
Rosedale-Moore Park Association
146 Crescent Rd., Toronto, ON M4W 1V2
B: 416-922-3714 Fax: 416-922-4523
Portfolio: Fund Raising, Finance Committee

Director: Jeff Bradshaw, Camp Wenonah
1477 Reynolds Ave., Burlington, ON L7M 3B8
H: 905-319-0163
e-mail: campwenonah@sympatico.ca
Portfolio: Archives, Integration

Director: David Latimer, Kilcoo Camp
150 Eglinton Ave. East, #204, Toronto, ON M4P 1E8
B: 416-486-5264 Fax: 416-486-3854
Portfolio: Fund Raising, Public Awareness

Director: Kate Moore, Camp Allsaw
36 Evelyn Ave., Toronto, ON M6P 2Y9
B: 416-766-4204 Fax: 416-766-4204
e-mail: allsaw@interlog.com
Portfolio: Diversity, Membership, Newsletter

Director: Keith Publicover, Tim Horton Children's Foundation, R.R.#1, Campbellville, ON L0P 1B0
B: 905-854-1999 Fax: 905-854-1990
e-mail: kdp@globalserve.net
Portfolio: Health Care, Standards

Director: Dave Ward, YMCA John Island Camp
185 Lloyd St., Sudbury, ON P3B 1N1
B: 1-800-465-9622 Fax: 705-688-0751
e-mail: david_ward@ymca.ca
Portfolio: Camping Guide, Members' Directory, Skills

Regional Representatives

Eastern Ontario (Ottawa): Ian Richardson
Arrowhead Camp, 115 Larkin Drive, Nepean, ON K2J 1C2
B/Fax: 613-825-4426

Northeastern Ontario (Sudbury): Dave Ward
YMCA John Island Camp
185 Lloyd St., Sudbury, ON P3B 1N1
B: 1-800-465-9622 Fax: 705-674-3236
e-mail: david_ward@ymca.ca

Northwestern Ontario (Thunder Bay): Charlie Wilson
Dorion Bible Camp
408 South Marks Street
Thunder Bay, ON P7E 1M5
B: 807-857-2331 H: 807-622-4601

Southwestern Ontario (London): Jim Janzen
YMCA-YWCA Camping, c/o George White Outdoor Centre, 1795 Clarke Road, London, ON N5X 3Z6
B: 519-667-3300 Fax: 519-455-2519
e-mail: ymcajjanzen@odyssey.on.ca

School Year Task Force

The announcement in September that children might return to school the week before Labour Day produced a quick reaction from many of our members. We responded as an Association and as individual member camps by calling and faxing the offices of the Minister of Education & Training and our local MPPs. We know that at least some of them were quite surprised that such a plan would have far-reaching negative effects on camps and other summer businesses. We also started reaching out to other organizations that would be affected. Although the suggestion of an earlier start for children was withdrawn, we must continue to prepare in case the issue is again raised.

Last June, Dorothy Walter agreed to head a Task Force to study the 12-month school year when the Minister suggested that possibility. As any change to the school year will have an impact on our camps, we will study the issue and its effects, establish liaisons with other affected organizations, and gather pertinent data. Larry Bell's article in the September *OCA'sional News* should be compulsory reading for those who believe that learning can only take place in a classroom. We are grateful that Dorothy has agreed to continue with the Task Force and input from members is always welcomed.

As reported by Barb Gilbert

Interaction with Integration

"A Frontier Committee"

Welcome back to the Ontario Camping Association where our aim is to serve children and adults through our many day and residential camps.

As active participants of the Ontario Camping Association, the Integration Committee is dedicated to working with our member camps to encourage children and adults with special needs to participate fully at their sites.

The Integration Committee is here to serve you

The sub-committees which have been organized include:

▪ Education, which informs others about awareness and information about dealing with persons with special needs

▪ Networking, where integration members attend OCA events to discuss the feasibility of Integration with other members

▪ Resources, specific information that camp directors and senior staff are encouraged to use as a reference tool

The Integration Committee is always looking for new members to assist us in helping you. If you are interested in joining our Committee, please contact Sari Grossinger at Camp Robin Hood at 416-736-4443 or via the OCA office at 416-781-0525.

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OCA Archives

The OCA Archives Committee is again alive and well. Members include Bruce Hodgins (Chair), Bernadine Dodge (Trent University archivist), Janet Adamson, Peter Gilbert, Carolea Butters and Jeff Bradshaw.

The history of the Committee and its interrelationships are fascinating. The link with Trent began back in the late '60s through the efforts of Alan Wilson, Dr. Mary Northway and Adele and Harry Ebbs. The committee had been suggested by Adele Ebbs in 1966 as a possible Centennial project. Negotiations with Trent progressed. In 1969 the Trent University Archives officially became the home of the OCA records and shortly thereafter in 1971 that of the CCA and many member camps.

The collection has grown to be very large indeed and now comprises some 100 cubic feet of textual records and dozens of oral history cassette tapes.

On her death in 1987, Mary Northway bequeathed the major part of her estate to Trent. This was the largest single gift the University has received to date. The bequest was for the library and the book collection, for the archives and the maintenance of its holdings, and for the Canadian studies program and its various projects. In 1994, the reading room of the Trent University Archives was dedicated as the "Northway Reading Room" in honour of Mary Northway and her father Garfield Northway.

A history subcommittee of the OCA Archives Committee published *Blue Lake and Rocky Shore* in 1984. Much of the text and all of the photographs were made possible by material preserved in the archives. In 1992, Janet Adamson and Bernadine Dodge produced a booklet entitled *Look To This Day* which guides camp directors in the preservation and storage of their non-current records. The staff of Trent University regularly produce a variety of guides to the OCA/CCA records. You can access these via the

Trent Archives web page at: <http://ivory.trentu.ca/www/bl/archives/archives.htm>.

As sources for research, the audio tape collection is particularly valuable as a chronicle of the experiences, goals and perspectives of the great camping figures of the distant and not-too-distant past. We need to continue this project. We also need more staff manuals, forms and brochures; we need photographs of your camp; we need minute books, correspondence and program documentation. We also need more research and greater use of these valuable archives. Carry this message to your staff and friends!

Bruce Hodgins

Chair, OCA Archives Committee

Potential Recommendations

The Lifesaving Society established a Safety Standards Committee last spring to research issues of concern and set standards or publish policy that aids in maintaining safety and professionalism in lifeguarding. One of the issues they have been working on is the maximum of time a lifeguard should be allowed to directly supervise on deck before he/she is given a break. The proposed recommendation is that lifeguards be given a 15-minute break away from the direct supervision of swimmers and the deck environment every two hours.

If you have a pool at your facility, this recommendation, if implemented, may affect you. If you have any comments regarding this proposal, contact your Lifesaving Society representative as soon as possible.

As reported by Fiora Hawryluk

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Camping - Meeting the Challenge

The challenge of the future, the challenge of change, the challenge of working with youth, the challenge of life and the challenge of getting up in the morning all mean different things to different people. Regardless of the individual, challenge implies preparation and a willingness to succeed. The **1998 Conference for Directors and Senior Staff** is all about meeting the challenge. Is your organization ready for the future? Does your camp have a plan of action for the next decade? Will change control you or will you be in control of change? These questions and more will be discussed **February 19-22, 1998 at the Sheraton Parkway Hotel, Richmond Hill**. Bring your senior staff, program staff and others who will play an instrumental role in meeting the challenge.

Look for the 1998 Conference registration package arriving shortly!

Your 1998 OCA Conference Steering Committee

Yours For the Asking

One of the characteristics of the camping community has been its generosity in the of sharing knowledge. This will be reflected in a new column of the OCA's News, "Yours For the Asking."

Ted and Elaine Cole, and Tracy Shand will, on a regular basis, undertake to answer questions presented by the membership. I encourage all camps and friends of camping to write in with their questions! Your name and camp affiliation need not be published; however, when writing to "Yours For the Asking," c/o the OCA Office, please do remit your name and a daytime telephone number.

The combined experience of our "panel" is indeed formidable. Ted and Elaine Cole are the owners and directors of Walden Canada, a residential co-ed camp located near Bancroft, Ontario. Ted is a past president of the OCA and has participated on numerous committees, including Legislation and Fundraising. Elaine is a registered nurse and is equally active within the camping community. She is currently serving on the Human Resources Committee.

Tracy Shand is the director of Camp Naorca, the City of North York, Parks and Recreation Day Camp program. Tracy began her camping career as a counsellor at Camp Mi-a-kon-da in 1980 before making the leap to Day Camping in 1982. Tracy is also responsible for community recreational programming and sits on the City of North York Integration Committee. She has been involved in the OCA for years, including being a visitor in the Accreditation process.

We hope you will enjoy this regular feature of your newsletter. Don't forget to write in with your questions!

Fiora Hawryluk
Editor

Question: "We've never had a dress code at camp before, but after this summer I'm seriously considering instituting one.

Piercing, tattoos and shaven heads are becoming more and more prevalent amongst staff, and it has given rise to several awkward situations. Parents have commented, sometimes unfavourably, on "unique" appearances. What can I do to reassure parents, while respecting my staff's individualistic approaches to body art?"

Answer: Ted and Elaine respond: "Oh the folly of youth." It was not long ago that I remember wearing headbands, lovebeads and holes in my jeans. This seemed quite acceptable among my friends; however, to my parents and teachers, I seemed dirty, unkempt, irresponsible and took no pride in my self-worth. In their eyes, this was unacceptable behaviour. One role of a teenager is to shock! So despite the fact that ear-piercing, body tattooing and shaved heads may seem inappropriate to me, it may not be the view of their peers. Dress does not necessarily represent attitude. This issue becomes difficult when campers or parents complain about staff appearances. Even though this person may be your most outstanding staff, the camp should have either a dress code in place prior to camp in their staff manual or an alternative could be given, for example, "If you choose to wear this belly button ring, this is fine, but the campers have found it disturbing. Please either remove it or wear a t-shirt." The choice is theirs.

Most staff are respectful of these concerns and will comply, but for your own piece of mind something in a staff manual can be written about respecting staff's choice. But the final decision will be at the camp director's discretion.

Tracy responds: First and foremost, as representatives of Camp Naorca and of the City of North York, our staff are required

to wear a designated staff shirt as designated by our dress code policy (clearly stated in our Terms of Employment). This presents a clean and consistent appearance to the general public and our clientele and allows campers to be able to recognize a friend or helpful hand in the world of many big people (it also makes morning wardrobe choices very easy).

Part of our Pre-Camp training week also focuses on the messages that we send as a staff group and how others may perceive us as individuals. Being appropriate and professional are discussed. For example, hats are essential sunsmart attire; however, beer company logos on baseball caps are not appropriate.

On a more personal level, I remember when Boomer, Assistant Director of Camp Naorca for many years, was first hired to work at the Day Camp, he sported a cleanly shaved mohawk hairdo and had a couple of long dangling earrings. Campers of all ages thought he was cool and respected him for being an individual. Parents, some unsure at first, also saw a smile and a very child-centered approach. Camp is a place where we need to constantly encourage staff and campers alike to be themselves and to be proud of their individualism.

Dress code or no dress code, staff need to have a smile and should be at camp for the campers. As a camp director, I'd much rather be working with a staff person with a pierced nose who is good at and cares about their job versus a staff person with a sunburn and a bad attitude.

In Day Camping staff have the advantage of conversing and developing a close rapport with parents on a daily basis at bus stops. If staff are polite, professional, and clearly interested in the children most parents quickly see past their appearance.

It is OCA Election Time

May we recommend and encourage you to serve? Can you recommend and encourage others to serve?

Now is the time for all good camping professionals to come to the aid of their Association . . . and the camping movement in Ontario. By now, you should have received a notice of meeting for the Annual and General Meeting of OCA Members on December 11 in London, Ontario, along with nomination forms for available positions on the OCA Board of Directors. The OCA welcomes your involvement in the ongoing work and growth of the OCA. It also welcomes your considered thought of other people with talent who may be willing to work on behalf of the Association.

For more information and job descriptions associated with Board positions (four Director and one Treasurer positions are available this year), please contact the OCA Office. The deadline for receipt of nominations to the OCA Office is 12:00 noon on Friday, November 14, 1997. May we recommend and encourage you to serve? Can you recommend and encourage others to serve?

Calendar of Events

November

Conference Committee Meeting	Thursday, November 6
Board Meeting OCA Board Room	Wednesday, November 19 11:00 am
Health Care Committee Meeting OCA Board Room	Thursday, November 20 at 7:00 pm

December

Conference Committee Meeting	Thursday, December 4
Board Meeting London, Ontario	Thursday, December 11
Annual General Meeting (AGM) Highland Country Club London, Ontario	Thursday, December 11 5:00 pm

January

Board Meeting OCA Board Room	Wednesday, January 14
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Conference Committee Meeting	Wednesday, January 14
Health Care Committee Meeting OCA Board Room	Thursday, January 15 7:00 pm
Integration Committee Meeting OCA Board Room	Monday, January 19 1:00 pm

February

Conference Committee Meeting	Thursday, February 5
Integration Committee Meeting OCA Board Room	Monday, February 9 4:00 pm
Board Meeting OCA Board Room	Wednesday, February 11
Health Care Committee Meeting OCA Board Room	Thursday, February 12 7:00 pm
Directors and Senior Staff Conference 1998 Sheraton Parkway Hotel Richmond Hill	Thursday, February 19 to Sunday, February 22

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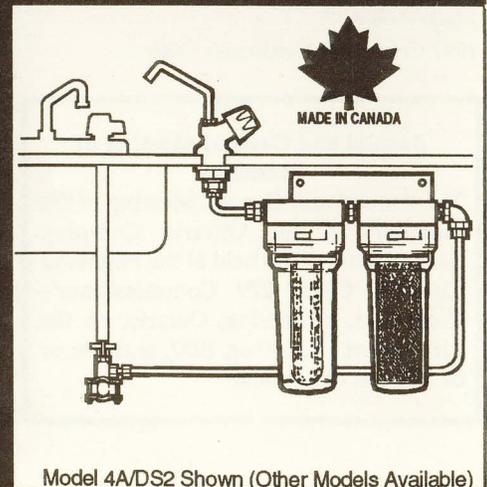
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Positions Available

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Positions Wanted

Camp Director in search of employment. Hospitality Management & Social Work credentials. With 10 years experience in the social and camping sectors. Call Judy 905-471-6314.

OCA Bulletin Board

Announcements

Attention all 1997 Counsellor Conference Attendants!! This is a reminder to the winner of the two Raptor tickets that a date for the game has been picked. The game will be Monday, November 24th at 7:00 pm, Toronto Raptors versus Portland Trailblazers. Please contact Maija Zeibots, Camp Gay Venture at 416-922-6952 or Ted Morgan directly at the Toronto Raptors at 416-216-1966. We unfortunately did not receive a name of the winner at the Conference and are hoping that the winner will come forward with the certificate that was issued.

Thanks and congratulations!

Maija Zeibots
1997 Counsellor Conference Chair

Annual and General Meeting of Members

The Annual and General Meeting of the members of the Ontario Camping Association will be held at the Highland Country Club, 279 Commissioner's Road East, in London, Ontario, on the 11th day of December, 1997, at the hour of 5:00 pm (local time).

Noteworthy

On Thursday, October 9, 1997 at The Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Ernst & Young, together with *Canadian Business Magazine*, Bank of Montreal, Nesbitt Burns, McCarthy Tetrault and Air Canada hosted the 1997 Ontario Entrepreneur of the Year Awards Banquet. The program is designed to honour companies whose hard work and perseverance provide Ontario communities with a solid foundation for future economic growth. There are 10 categories, from Emerging Entrepreneur to High Technology Entrepreneur to Manufacturing Entrepreneur. Jack Pearse, John Jorgenson and Jane McCutcheon were declared the award winners for The 1997 Socially Responsible Entrepreneur of the Year Award for their contribution to the growth and development of thousands of children. Tawingo's growth from Summer Camp to The Tawingo Outdoor Centre to Tawingo College was recognized, along with the series of Camp Tawingo Publications that have been sold worldwide. It was also Jack, John and Jane's commitment to volunteer work worldwide that made the nomination unique. Camp Tawingo will be one of several award winners featured in the December issue of *Canadian Business Magazine*.



OCA'sional News offers you a variety of ways to promote products and services within organized camping. The Ontario Camping Association welcomes articles and photo submissions. The next deadline is November 15th for December publication.

• Display ads are sold on a single or multiple insertion rate, with a \$50.00 non-members fee. Please contact the OCA office for rates. Camera-ready art is required.

• We also offer professional and business directory ads of business card size. OCA member fee: \$35 per insert (up to three issues) or \$28 per issue (minimum four to maximum nine issues).

• Classified ads are sold with a maximum size of 25 words for a fee of \$10 for members and \$25 for non-members. Additional space sold in 25 word increments.

• Paid advertising content will not exceed editorial space.

• The *OCA'sional News* is published nine times a year by the Ontario Camping Association, a voluntary, non-profit association committed to excellence in Camping. We want to hear from you. Please send your thoughts and inquires to the Editorial Committee, care of the office.

• Fiora Hawryluk, Editor. 416-481-2788.
e-mail: hawryluk@stn.net

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1810 Avenue Road, Suite 302
Toronto, ON M5M 3Z2
416-781-0525
Fax: 416-781-7875

e-mail: oca@ontcamp.on.ca
Web site: www.ontcamp.on.ca