



OCAsional News

Published by the Ontario Camping Association

April 1998

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Learning Disabilities Don't Kill... They Merely Destroy Lives

In January of 1993, after much soul searching, extensive research on the topic of learning disabilities and a great deal of preparation, the members of our board of directors, my newly appointed assistant and I were working very hard at establishing a brand spanking new residential camp to service children with learning disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder (with or without hyperactivity).

As a long-time member of OCA, I was receiving and reading the *OCAsional News*, and I kept seeing articles dealing with "inclusion" which basically left me to feel that, unless your camp got behind this movement, you were nowhere.

I remember vividly thinking to myself, "What are we doing? Why are we doing this if there is such a strong movement, albeit apparent, towards, "inclusion?" People must think we are fools. Isn't it challenging enough starting a new residential camp, given the economic climate, never mind one which services only a segment of the population? So my assistant and I sat in our office, discouraged and not really knowing what to think and where to go. Even the word "inclusion" turned me off for whatever reason and, what was "inclusion" anyway?, but by that point, we were committed (and at times it felt like it too...) and there was no turning back. The camp had to open and so it did.

We had a total of only 26 campers that first summer, but I can tell you, it didn't take long before all of our doubts were dispelled and all of the answers we were looking for hit us right "smack" in the face and, more importantly, through the heart. I will never forget the incredible pride and

satisfaction we all felt as we greeted our first group of campers. The group was anything but homogenous and the challenges were many. I could write a book about what went on that summer, and probably will one day. I could tell the success stories and list the many achievements of some of our campers, as well as describe the pain of having to send a child home. We witnessed first-hand the self-destruction of a young boy who simply had nowhere to go and no options left at age 11. At the end of that summer, the staff and I sat there numbed by what had just happened. We had mixed feelings because all of a sudden, the life's blood of camp, the campers, had left and we were literally grieving. Our bodies were drained of energy and our minds were still reeling from trying to "keep up" with our campers. And yet we were certainly happy to have some time to ourselves. But there was no doubt as to what had happened there that summer and there was nothing, but nothing, that was going to stop us now.

You see, the campers we had that summer and continue to welcome suffer from what are called "invisible disabilities." They either have learning disabilities or ADD, with or without hyperactivity. On the outside, these children appear as though there is absolutely nothing wrong with them, and so the general perception is that they should learn, behave and react just like any other "normal" child. And that is where the problem begins. We all make assumptions, often based on what we see, and so what people perceive and expect from children who have learning

disabilities is in fact totally out of whack with the realities that face these children. And that is perfectly understandable because, in most cases, there are no external signs or indications of their disabilities. The children themselves are typically confused by their own condition as they, on one hand see their strengths, while on the other hand see their disabilities. Take for example a child who is very bright, good looking, a whiz at math and a very good athlete, but who can't read even if his/her life depended on it. How do you think this child perceives himself or herself? Think of the frustration and, if nothing else, the social implications this would have for that child. And then you take that same child and you add the fact that he or she has auditory processing difficulties. Imagine trying to understand the rules of a game or the coach's instructions and, again, think of the social implications this would have.

See *Campers Need a Choice*, on page 10

What's Inside

From Barb's Laptop	2
Camping Makes the World Go Round	4
Photo Contest Winners	5
Standard Time	6
Yours For the Asking	8

"Greatness is a two-faced coin — and its reverse is humility." — M. Steen

From Barb's Laptop

Peter Truman's article, "Control and Conflict at Camp: A Perspective" in the March *OCA'sional News* provided much food for thought. In particular, his analogy of "boxes" left me with images of people in boxes drifting into my mind in every imaginable setting: boxes of paper, boxes of personal space, boxes of relationships. Whether I was talking about OCA Board Structure, staff evaluations, welcoming new campers or volunteer recruitment, I continued to see people in boxes relating to other people in boxes.

Boxes can be comfortable and comforting places. We know where we fit and what is expected of us. Our lives and actions are defined and we have a sense of security. An image of a safe, comfortable box floated into my mind as I read Jeff Bradshaw's article on welcoming international campers. Neat, orderly boxes lined up in my head as I listened to a colleague describe his staff structure. Some boxes have a list of duties tacked to the wall and some have connections to certain other boxes. Some of this is good and comforting, and necessary.

Today's box can be tomorrow's prison. Growth and change are part of living for all of us from the youngest camper to the most senior director. Between summers and even during the relatively short time at camp, we all grow, mature and learn new skills. We are ready to take on new responsibilities, try new tasks, accept new challenges and forge new relationships. That comforting box feels confining.

Now, question marks appear around these boxes. What purpose does the box serve? Is it a comforting box? How rigid is the box? Can it change? Should it change? Who decides if and when it changes?

Things to Do

- RSVP to the Human Resources evening on "Parents of Today and Tomorrow"

- Prepare for a lively discussion on membership/standards review at the April Board meeting
- Work on outside grading around our house
- Join other visitors and visitees at the Standards Workshop on April 28th

Barb Gilbert
President

The Counselling Edge

Are your summer staff ready to be enlightened by sessions which will benefit your camp? Are your staff ready to exchange ideas with other summer camp staff members? Are they ready to go to the EDGE for your camp and your children?

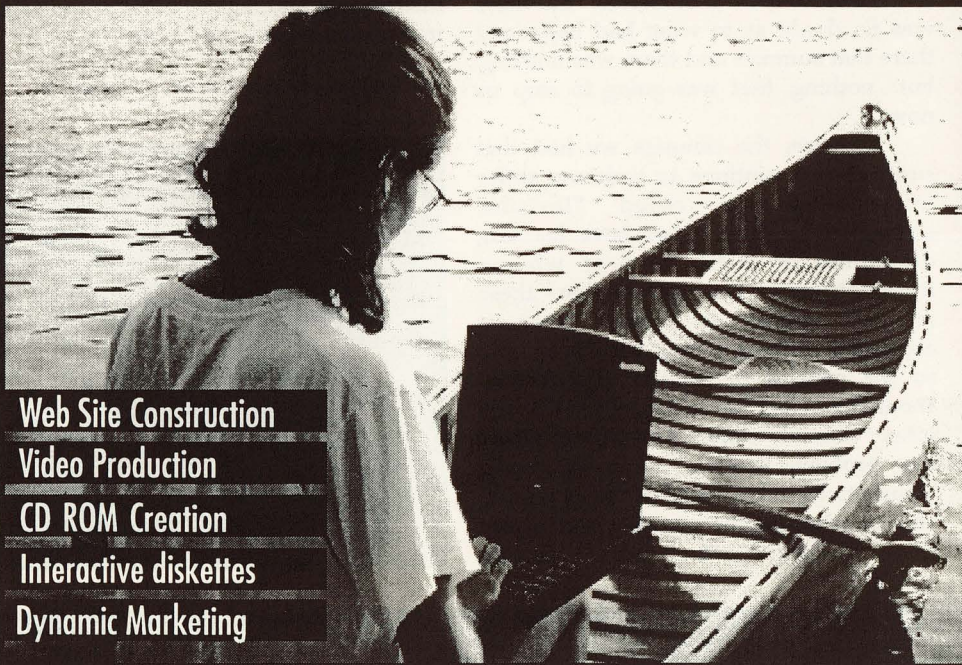
Well, I want to convince you that this year's Counsellor Conference will benefit all your staff for the entire summer. We want to provide all your staff with the opportunity of gaining new ideas and experiences from a vast array of knowledgeable speakers and presenters.

We want to offer your staff a wide range of perspectives on different camping issues. The Conference will offer instruction in such things as unique camp-wide games, skills development, new craft ideas and a whole lot more. And it is all for your counselling and senior staff.

Just remember that the "Staff Training Day," *The Counselling Edge* will be held at Seneca College King Campus on Saturday, May 23. So, plan to register your staff and give them the EDGE this summer.

John Bergman
Member of Counsellor Conference Committee

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Editor's Note

I find that speaking to parents of prospective campers, either over the telephone, at a camp fair or at an open house, to be one of the most enjoyable aspects of my profession. Time and time again, parents have shown themselves to be enthusiastic and willing to learn more about the benefits of camping. What seems to have changed, though, is the amount of trust that families are willing to bestow upon a certain camp. As a camp director recently pointed out to me, the ready availability of printed, glossy materials, camp videos and beautifully designed web sites may serve to decrease the actual personal contact between the camp director and the camper family. This is certainly in contrast to how marketing was done one or two decades ago. How many times have I heard directors describe their "early days" in the profession, where weekends and every single evening was spent visiting prospective contacts, often while hauling cumbersome slide show equipment! This meant that would-be campers and their parents had a chance to meet and spend plenty of time going over the merits of the camp, not to mention the merits of the person running the camp.

Nowadays, some parents will make a decision based upon an advertisement in the camp section of a community newspaper and a phone call to the camp office. Others will rely upon the advice given to them by friends; references by neighbours and relatives are carefully solicited. Then we come to the parents who excruciatingly research every single aspect of the camp's operation. At the

camp office where I work, a closely typed two-page fax recently arrived, crammed with questions that would probably take me a full day to respond to. Clearly, this was from a parent who was not going to entrust his children to just any OCA camp!

For most parents, the anxiety remains. Will my child have fun? Will she make new friends? What if it rains every single day of the session? Have I made the right choice? Will I miss him? Will she miss me? What about the camp director? Does she have the right qualifications/ background/philosophy?

Parents of today are more harried and don't necessarily have the luxury of time to research their choice of camp. This does not mean, however, that they are not willing to share their opinions before the selection is made, while their children attend our camps, and after the kids have long gone home! On April 21st, at a Toronto location, the Human Resources Committee will be hosting an evening event that will present, for your consideration and elucidation, a panel of parents who have made or are in the process of making that all-important choice regarding camp. Every type of camp will be represented by this panel.

Come to listen to what these parents have to say; ask questions of your own; find out what parents of today really want and expect.

For more information on this event, see page 11 in this issue of the *OCA'sional News*.

Fiora Hawryluk

Triumph Over Ice Storm '98

The Rev. David Townshend, his wife Sandy Cunstra and daughter Emily (4 1/2) found themselves in need of warmth and shelter when their home cooled to 43 degrees Fahrenheit after only 24 hours without hydro. Checking out the local shelter, it was obvious that it would not be a very restful or comfortable place to be. While buying snack food at the Westport IGA, he bumped into Ike Doornekamp, director of Camp Iawah. Ike invited them to stay. It had taken the Iawah permanent staff two days to cut their way out to the nearest county road, but with a generator they lacked only light in their main building; even hot showers were available!

David was able to leave his family in the warm, safe care of the Iawah folk and start ministering to the people of his parish. What a start to residential camping for Emily. Back in junior kindergarten five days later, she could share with her friends that she had been to winter camp!

Rev. David Townshend
OCA Individual Member

OCA Board Members

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Dorion Bible Camp
408 South Marks Street
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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: ymcajanzen@odyssey.on.ca

Camping Makes the World Go Round

The recent OCA Conference for Directors and Senior Staff was truly an international affair!

We were delighted to welcome 30 Russian camp directors from St. Petersburg and Moscow, two delegates from Japan and Holland, as well as several of our American camping friends.

The Conference was full of new initiatives that were aimed at providing our guests with an educational, informative, hospitable and satisfying stay in Ontario. Prior to the official start of the Conference, an orientation was held for all international and out-of-province delegates. The Presidential Suite was used twice for late evening receptions and to provide a more informal environment for our international friends. John "Jorgi" Jorgenson and I facilitated a full-morning workshop for the Russian delegates on camping in Canada. Finally, the International Camping Fellowship hosted an evening program on the Friday night of the Conference with songs from Jack Pearse, activity stations featuring international games and activities, video highlights from the 1994 and 1997 International Camping Congress and the opportunity to hear about the plans for Japan 2000 - The 5th International Camping Congress (mark October 2-5, 2000 on your calendar!).

With the proliferation of awards shows this time of year, I thought it was only appropriate to make some special award presentations on behalf of our international friends to all those who were so instrumental in providing such a wonderful experience. Here goes:

The Jack Pearse Award for Best Song Leading - Jack Pearse; Most Flexibility in Providing Early Conference Registration - Elaine

Patterson; Outstanding Welcome at an International Airport - Jane McCutcheon; Largest Sacrifice of Personal Space for the Hospitality of Others - Barb Gilbert; The Patti Thom Award for Best Conference Meal Coordination - Patti Thom; Best Supporting Performance (it's a tie): - Tamara Trushkovskaya, Dorothy Walter, Olga Kostin, Karen Koehler, Georgina & David Knox, Karen McGrath, Ellen Nash, Neil Fortin, Garrett Kahlmann, Ellen Thomas, Ken Mariciak, and Moore, Emily, Clayton & Graham Ross (all for their work on the Friday evening "Camping Makes the World Go Round" program); Best Choreography (Friday Evening Program) - John Jorgenson; Best Welcoming Remarks by a Canadian Camping Association President - Mike Nelson; Longest Distance Travelled to lead an Origami Program - Mary and John McCutcheon (for their trip down from Ottawa); Honorary Award for Meritorious Service - Ellie Krylov (our favorite interpreter who was recognized with a special presentation during our Friday night program); Best Promotion of an Upcoming International Camping Congress - Sako Tanaka & Pico; The Valery Kostin Award for Loose Translation for an International Delegation - Valery Kostin; Best Motion Picture - Titanic (just seeing if you are paying attention); Best Overall Assistance with an International Gathering - Liz Mossington & Amy Herringer; The "I'm Just the Bartender" Award - Eoin Wood (who was much more than just the bartender... a terrific host for all of our international friends as well!); The Larry Bell "Tell Me What You Need and I'll Get It" Award - Larry Bell (who arranged busing for our Russian delegates to Pearson Airport); and The Gracious Conference Chair Award - Jill Dundas (who helped to make everything run so smoothly!).

In addition, thanks to MANY other people who helped to make the OCA Conference such a success for our international guests.

*Jeff Bradshaw
Canadian Representative
International Camping Fellowship*



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A Special Thank You

Editor's Note: This is an open letter to all those in attendance at the OCA Annual Conference banquet and others who may be interested.

Perhaps I could have been more assertive at the time; or the program had limited time and things had to move along to conserve each and every minute; or tiredness caused a little forgetfulness. Whatever the reason, and it doesn't matter, the opportunity to thank people or acknowledge their part in my growth as a camping professional was put on hold.

That's over with now, so let's move forward, which is the purpose of this letter.

As I sat at the table reading the names of the people I was joining as an Honorary Life Member, I was completely humbled. I could not imagine being included on such a list. Thank you for acknowledging the little that I was able to contribute to the OCA.

Like all of the others on the list, the energy to contribute comes from more than one source. I would not be able to do all those things without the support and encouragement of my wife Gloria. But I must admit there is a number of other women that need to be included. June Labbett, Barbara Gilchrist, Jean Babcock and Peggy Latimer were all instrumental in getting me involved in the Association. It's almost impossible to measure all that I have gained as a result of my involvement in the Association without considering the encouragement I received from these women. A special thanks to all of them and to the Association for their part in my development.

My goal for camp has always been to create situations that will allow campers to feel how I felt this evening. That feeling of pride and accomplishment in each and every activity that acknowledges and promotes a positive self-image. After this evening, I will be better able to describe the goal, to campers and staff, to which I strive.

Thank you,

*Fred Okada
Director, Bolton Camp*

The Envelope, Please

The following are the results of the 1997/98 Society of Camp Directors Annual Photo Contest.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Grand Prize | St. John O'Neill, YMCA Camp Wanakita |
| Sunrise/Sunset | First Prize: Gary Gray, YMCA John Island Camp
Second Prize: Jalyynn Bosley, YMCA Camp Wanakita
Third Prize: Christine Persaud, YMCA Camp Pinecrest |
| Instant Image | First Prize: David Latimer, Kilcoo Camp
Second Prize: Tim Mosher, Camp Kodiak
Third Prize: Shelia Allen, Onondaga Camp |
| Wonders of Nature | First Prize: David Lever, Camp Kandalore
Second Prize: Tim Mosher, Edgewood
Third Prize: Kate Boyd, YMCA Camp Wanakita |

Display: OCA Annual Conference, Feb. 19-22, 1998
For the Society: P.G. Gilbert, co-ordinator
Judged by: Pauline Hodgetts, President, SCD
Presentations by: Pauline Hodgetts, President, SCD

Special thanks to Caryl Colton and Jen Palacios of the OCA Conference Committee and Mike Moore of Camp Kandalore for the display panels.

There were 83 entries, the most ever. The quality keeps improving year after year. Our thanks to everyone who entered, putting a little bit of their heart and soul on display for all to see.

For the 1998 Photo Contest, you can expect to see the first promotion in a few weeks and a follow-up during the summer to generate interest among staff and campers.

*Peter Gilbert
Society of Camp Directors*

Welcome Provisional Members

The OCA extends a warm welcome to our new provisional members. For the next two summers, these camps will be visited as part of the Standards Visitation Program. With the addition of these six camps, we now have 15 camps working toward being an accredited member of the OCA.

Hila Science Camp
Wayne Campbell
Pembroke, ON
613-582-3632

Increase Your Success
Bernadette Hood
Scarborough, ON
416-439-9009

**MacSkimming Nature Camp
and March Break Camp**
Melanie Riddell
Cumberland, ON
613-833-2080

Camp Moshava
Lawrence Weinberg
Downsview, ON
416-630-7578

UCC Camps
Tim Worgan
Toronto, ON
416-484-8627

Yamaha Summer Arts Camp
Stephen Couldridge
North York, ON
416-224-5590

Standard Time

A Bulletin of the Ontario Camping Association Standards Committee

It's May and many of you are already at camp, if not in body, then in spirit. A safe and healthy summer is our number one priority and although we cannot guarantee safety, we can do a great deal to lower risk.

Here's a staff training activity you might try to creatively involve your staff in risk management by using your Standards Guidelines. Divide your staff into teams and give each team a section of the Guidelines. Have them do a visit of an area of camp and then report back to you with comments and recommendations. Again, just because the visit process takes place every four years, you can still be in tip-top shape in the interim.

IF YOU ARE HAVING AN ACCREDITATION VISIT THIS SUMMER and you are nervous about the visit or unsure of how to handle a situation or how to answer a question, you have a number of options:

- 1) Call the OCA office. We are not "inspectors" and this is not like "school." It is in all of our interest to have every camp feel comfortable about the summer and we ask that you please call us for advice and suggestions.
- 2) Call someone you know who has been a camp director and who has gone through the process.
- 3) Why not call your Visitor? Again, they are not "inspecting" your camp. They would appreciate being able to help you out before the visit because a) it will make the visit go even smoother than you thought it would, b) it will establish a rapport between you and your Visitor and c) it will involve your Visitor thus ensuring that everything goes well on the day of the visit.
- 4) Read and re-read the Guidelines. Remember that you are allowed to answer "no" to a standard, provided you have a good explanation. You can also answer "not applicable," again, provided you have good explanation.

If anything out of the ordinary happens, call Bev at the OCA office. If you do not hear from your Visitor by the end of MAY, you should call them! Don't breathe a sigh of relief and say, "Well they didn't call me so I guess I won't be having a visit this summer." You may have a chance to notice that we will immediately launch into action and do our best to correct the situation.

Dear Flopsy

Flopsy Bloomer is a syndicated columnist how has been writing for the Standards Committee since she was Sensitivity Co-ordinator at Camp Qualude in 1968.

Here are some recently asked questions.

Dear Flopsy,

What if you're a Visitor and circumstances make it impossible for you to visit?

Sleepless in Seattle

Dear Sleepless,

Call the OCA office and they will do their best to help you out. It would help if you can suggest an alternate Visitor, but if you cannot, the office will make the arrangements if time permits.

Dear Flopsy,

What if you and the Visitor simply don't get along and you feel that things aren't going well.

Harried in Haliburton

Dear Harried,

After the visit, call the OCA office and discuss it. They can then look into the matter and decide how best to handle it.

Dear Flopsy,

What if you are the Visitor and you see a staff member at the camp who broke a contract with you saying he had to go to summer school?

Oy Vey in Ottawa

Dear Oy Vey,

Remember that you are a Visitor and a guest at the camp. You should be polite, diplomatic and civil but at the appropriate time, you may want to mention the matter to the camp director. It's not a great idea to be confrontational with the staff member during the visit.

Dear Flopsy,

What if I show up at the camp and the director has yet to fill out the four page questionnaire? Am I supposed to just sit there and watch while he/she does it?

Antsy in Ancaster

Dear Antsy,

Yes it's true. Some directors don't prepare for the visit and they do not do justice to their camp or to the

accreditation process. You CAN "sit there" and "watch" them fill it out (and sigh a lot) or you can turn a negative into a positive and help them fill it out. Of course we don't live in a perfect world and sometimes there are truly unusual circumstances where the director may not have been informed by the Board that a visit was taking place. In this sense, patience, understanding and a sense of humour may be appropriate

Friendly Tips

Remember to check your Standards Guidelines and questionnaire that you were mailed. Make sure you get the correct set—day camp or residential camp.

A good idea is to plan the visit for a "normal" day at camp so the Visitor can see the different areas of activity. There is no need to do anything "special" for the Visitor.

Consult your checklist—it will guide you through everything you need to know as a camp director or as a Visitor. Plan to review the questionnaire at least one week before the visit. You may be surprised at all the areas of camp that require some looking into... and some that you might want to fix.

When your Visitor arrives, you can plan your agenda for the day. Some Visitors like to review the questionnaire and then tour the camp, while some like to do it in reverse.

A "typical" visit takes about three to four hours. If you start at 10:00 a.m., the bulk of the visit can take place before lunch.

The camp director or co-director should handle the visit whenever possible. If an alternate date has to be arranged give the Visitor as much advanced warning as possible. Only if the director cannot be present should a senior staff member conduct the visit.

After the visit, decide which one of you will mail the office copy of the questionnaire to the OCA office. **DO IT IMMEDIATELY!** The Visitor keeps one copy and the camp keeps one copy. One of the biggest causes of incomplete visits is the failure to return ALL the forms to the OCA office **IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE VISIT.** To be blunt, it is NOT okay to send in the forms at the end of the summer.

Commercial Member Update

The following is an update to the OCA's commercial membership list published in the 1998 *Camping Guide* and in last month's *OCA'sional News*.

The Idea Workshop Ltd.

Contact: Jonathan Packer
130 Spadina Ave., Suite 802, Toronto, ON M5V 2L4
416-504-3977; Fax: 416-504-1608

A merchandise development company working with Canadian illustrators to create graphic designs for T-shirts, sweatshirts, etc., as part of camp programs. Clients include the Shaw Festival and Upper Canada College.

Monkey Works Inc.

Contact: David Cherry
26 Academy Cr., Waterloo, ON N2L 5H1
519-746-2479; Fax: 519-746-2479

Installation of artificial climbing walls and training of staff for their use.

Prism Food Service Inc.

Contact: Mark Teal
2952 Nipiwini Dr., Mississauga, ON L5N 1X9
905-814-0668; Toll-Free: 1-888-584-7878; Fax: 905-814-0366
A small Canadian company dealing in soups, sauces, desserts and drink crystals.

Rainbow School Sportswear

Contact: Rodney Rolleman
221 Holiday Inn Dr., Cambridge, ON N3C 3T2
519-651-2123; Toll-Free: 1-800-463-5050; Fax: 519-651-2133
Custom autograph tees and sweatshirts.

J.D. Smith & Associates Insurance Brokers Inc.

Contact: J.D. Smith
2-105 West Beaver Creek Rd., Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1C6
905-764-7868; Toll-Free: 1-800-917-SAVE; Fax: 905-764-9618
Camp insurance specialists. OCA package that includes all risk, property, broad liability and sexual abuse coverage. Accident insurance and directors and officers with monthly payment options available.

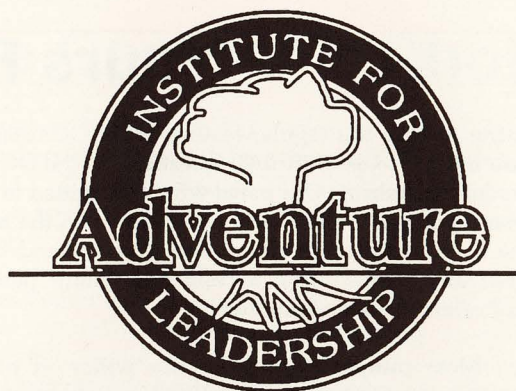
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Call the OCA Office at
416-781-0525 for label forms.



Ropes Course Instructor Courses

- Introduction to Adventure Programs
May 28-31
- High Ropes Instructor Courses
Part One: June 12-14
Part Two: June 19-21
- High Ropes Instructor Update
May 24
- Adventure for Educators
November 20-22
- Let's Play
April 4 or November 14

Equipment and Resource Supply

- Adventure Education Books from;
Project Adventure, Outward Bound, Expeditionary Learning, & the AEE.
- Debriefing Cards
- Climbing Equipment; including ropes course pulleys, harnesses, rope, carabiners, and more.

Ropes Course Installation

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associates inc.



991 King St. W., P.O. Box 89102, Hamilton, ON. L8S 4R5
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Yours For the Asking

Yours for the Asking is a regular feature of the *OCA*sional News. Readers are invited to send in their questions to the OCA office, attn: **Yours for the Asking**. Our panel will be delighted to respond in an upcoming issue! We are fortunate to have on the team Ted and Elaine Cole of Camp Walden, and Tracy Shand of Camp Naorca. Ted and Elaine bring a residential camp perspective, while Tracy offers the day camp view!

Question: Most camps by now have a policy in place that addresses the issue of sexual abuse where campers are concerned. However, I have just realized that my camp does not have a clearly defined policy concerning relationships between staff, especially if there is a power imbalance amongst the parties involved—for instance, a senior staff member initiating a relationship with a staff member who reports to him/her. Another example: improper touching (hugs that make the recipient "uncomfortable"). I worry about the possibility of sexual harassment. Does your camp have a policy that addresses this issue? Can you share it with us?

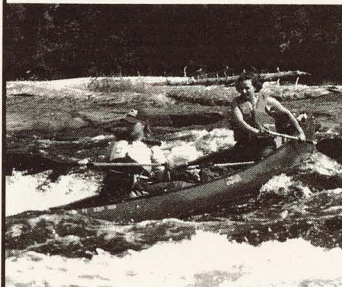
Ted and Elaine Cole respond: This is definitely a question of the 90s. There are really two issues—one is power and control; the second is sexual abuse and harassment. In both cases the actions are wrong. I cannot go into a dialogue on inappropriate behaviour, however the staff member who is being victimized needs someone to talk to who will provide advice, support and action to help with any consequences that may be needed.

At camp, we appoint several people to deal with sensitive issues; the senior administration are also made aware. We do not have anything printed in our staff manual but this is covered in pre-camp. This is an issue OCA may want to have a special educational session on.

Editor's Note: Tracy Shand is on vacation but will return next month for another edition of Yours for the Asking.



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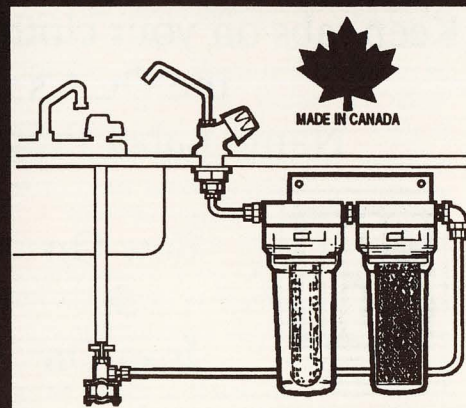
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How Can I Accept This Child?

Several OCA members met recently at a Breakfast Club meeting to discuss the resources available to camp professionals. There are sometimes difficult decisions to be made over how to accept children with special needs.

The discussion group, facilitated by members of the Special Needs Resource Committee and hosted by the Human Resources Committee, permitted the informal sharing of knowledge with regards to financial, ethical, legal and physical concerns. Highlights:

To avoid surprises

- give parents all available information in advance (define the camp's mandate and program; make it clear what the camp offers and what it can't)
- when reviewing health forms completed by parents, "read between the lines" and don't hesitate to follow up with a phone call if something doesn't seem quite right
- be prepared to knowledgeable discuss other options and resources if your program is not suitable

Dealing with outside support staff

Support staff for campers who require one-on-one are frequently paid by outside agencies. To ensure the integration of these valuable people with your own staff and to reduce potential conflicts:

- try to hire support staff directly
- have the support staff buy into the camp philosophy (they should read and sign off on the staff manual; attend pre-camp and staff meetings; have a contract)
- don't restrict support staff to one child only; use them as a resource for the entire camp
- team them up with other staff members so they don't burn out

Funding for support staff

- remind parents when and how to apply for funding; money can go to the family, who then pays the camp, or the funds can go directly to the camp
- all staff should be on the same pay scale; if a support worker is paid more, the camp should pay what they usually would, then the family can quietly supplement the wage if they wish

Hiring staff members with special needs

- financial assistance can be obtained through the Ontario Summer Jobs program (available to private sector camps as well) and SEED grants
- for staff who are unable to move quickly around the camp-site, modify the program to permit the campers to go to the staff person in question

Before concluding the discussion, the people present at the meeting raised the issue of "invisible disabilities" and the many challenges camps face.

Thank you, Sari Grossinger and Sarah Oosterhuis! The Special Needs Resource Committee does a great job of disseminating information to the camp community.

*As reported by Fiora Hawryluk
for the Human Resources Committee*

The Camper's Choice

Persons with a disability, just like persons without a disability, need to be provided with options when considering their journey through life. Options promote the ability to choose. Choice enhances a person's lifestyle by promoting individualism and confidence.

The Special Needs Resource Committee (formerly the Integration Committee) strongly supports "individual choice" and encourages potential campers with a disability to consider all his/her options before going to camp. The committee clearly recognizes that a) camp is not necessarily for every child and b) the "fit" needs to be a two-way street for both the camper and the camp.

Part of the Special Needs Resource Committee's role is to support the potential camper/family in terms of finding the "right fit" by presenting what options are available to the potential camper. By providing various resources to both the camper and the family, not only is the element of choice made available, but the family feels empowered, given that they have the tools to make the correct decision for their child.

As previously mentioned, not every person in this world with or without a disability is interested in attending camp. The Special Needs Resource Committee is sensitive to this fact and is in existence to support those children and adults and their families by providing resources, education and advocacy. Clearly, for the camper... the Choice is Theirs!

For more information regarding the SRNC or to become a member, please contact Sari Grossinger at 416-736-4443 and/or Sarah Oosterhuis at 905-832-6158.

Cathy Smart

Member of the Special Needs Resource Committee

Skills Weekend

It's time to start thinking about which staff you would like to send to Skills Weekend. With newly accredited courses, great program staff and a wonderful site, we're going to book up fast! Whether it is to sharpen up skills, learn new programs, or just to get psyched for the summer, we've got it all at Skills!!

Mark June 5-7, 1998 on your calendar and look for more details in next month's newsletter.

Jen Palacios

OCA Director

Get Your Videos

For those member camps who did not receive their complimentary copy of the OCA's new educational resource, "Setting A New Direction—A Resource Guide for Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Policies for Summer Camps" (along with accompanying video) during the Annual Conferene in February, your copy was mailed to you in late March.

Please watch your mail and, if you have not received your copy by the second week of April, call the OCA office.

Bob Smith

OCA Director

Campers Need a Choice

continued from page 1

Never mind the inner turmoil and frustration. It's important to understand what learning disabilities really are. They are a neurological condition which impacts the lives of children and adults and affects all facets of human functioning. Consider these facts: one out of 10 Canadians has learning disabilities; the most common long-term condition suffered by children zero to 14 years of age is learning disabilities; typically, only three percent of school age children with learning disabilities receive special services within their schools; almost 60 percent of all adolescent suicides had previously been diagnosed as having learning disabilities; in Canada, 15 to 20 percent of people with ADD/ADHD also have a specific learning disability. Why am I giving you these facts? Because the time is long overdue and it is crucial that we recognize the magnitude of the problem and the significance learning disabilities have in our society, I see a definite urgency when we are dealing with something as complex as "inclusion" or "integration."

Even though all camps have the most noble intentions in the world and ideally would like to serve all children regardless of their "abilities" or "disabilities," in my opinion and based on my experiences (dare I say over 20 years in the camping profession), no camp can and should claim to be all and end all for everyone, not even Camp Kirk. Given the background and the past experiences of most of our campers, I have no doubt that they are better-served in a small, intimate and nurturing environment where the staff/camper ratio is very high and where the whole camp program and atmosphere is designed to meet their needs. This does not exclude the fact that some of our campers could potentially have a wonderful experience in an integrated camp setting. However, that is not the issue. The real and only issue is that all campers be given a choice based on their individual needs, and their own goals and aspirations, and that the choice also be based on any given camp's philosophy, resources and capabilities. I was thrilled to be introduced to OCA's Special Needs Resource Committee while attending this year's Annual Conference. Subsequently, I have had the opportunity to meet with members

of that Committee and all I can say is "congratulations" and "thank you." Not only for all of the important work you are doing, but for validating what we are doing as a camp on behalf of children who have learning disabilities. I am proud to be part of an organization which recognizes and encourages choice and differences because only then will we be able to fully appreciate our abilities. Besides, to use a quote from a recent commercial: "Different is good...!"

*Henri Audet
Director, Camp Kirk*

Board News

Board meetings are never boring—presentations, committee and task force reports, discussions, decisions and social time. Some highlights from our last meeting on March 11th:

● The Board is pleased to announce that we have reached an agreement with the YMCA of Greater Toronto Summer Day Camps that will enable 38 YMCA Day Camps to join our Association. While a few details need to be worked out, we welcome to the OCA: 38 camps, five full time and over 500 seasonal staff, and over 10,000 summer campers.

● We heard a presentation by Brian Brown from Ontario Recreational Canoeing Association (ORCA). Watch for Brian's article in a future newsletter.

● Committee reports were presented and three new provisional member camps were approved.

● Ted Cole presented a report from the Task Force on OCA Board Structure. The report generated such a lively and interesting discussion among Board members that it will be discussed at our next meeting (April 14).

Your comments, questions and suggestions are always welcome.

*Barb Gilbert
OCA President*



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Calendar of Events

April

Environmental Advocacy OCA Board Room	Thursday, April 2 6:00 p.m.
Board Meeting OCA Board Room	Tuesday, April 14 1:00 p.m.
Health Care Committee Meeting OCA Board Room	Thursday, April 16 7:00 p.m.
Human Resources Event Parents of Today and Tomorrow Polly Hodgetts's House (Toronto)	Tuesday, April 21 7:00 p.m.
Standards Workshop Metro Public School Board Office	Tuesday, April 28 7:00 p.m.

May

Special Needs Resource Committee Meeting OCA Board Room	Monday, May 4, 10:00 a.m.
Board Meeting	Tuesday, May 12 11:00 a.m.
Counsellor Conference	Saturday, May 23

June

Skills Weekend	Friday, June 5 to Sunday, June 7
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INVITATION

The OCA's Human Resources Committee invites you to attend the following special event:

April 21/98 - 7:00 pm, 1 Ridge Drive Park, Toronto (Polly Hodgett's house)

Parents of Today and Tomorrow

- A panel of parents whose children attend both day and residential camps will let you know what they expect from camp. An informative and very useful evening as we prepare for our summer.

This event is FREE,
but please RSVP attendance to the OCA Office, 416-781-0525.
Refreshments provided.

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Positions Available

Camp Katonim summer day camp, Mon. to Sat., 8-week program at Balfour Beach, Lake Simcoe, is looking for staff secretary, head of A & C, head of nursery, drama, senior counsellors, swim instructors. Live on site. Phone 416-410-9460.

Learn, work, live the adventure.... The Ecotourism and Adventure Program at Humber College, Toronto, Canada. Ecotourism and Adventure Recreation are becoming the phenomena of tourism in the modern age. Humber College has put together a program that will prepare you to take the lead in this exciting industry. The program is designed to provide college and university graduates with the concepts, skills, techniques and real-world applications required to work in Ecotourism and Adventure Recreation. You will learn how to plan and implement programs for the eco and adventure traveller, while developing business and other specialized skills. For more information on this exciting opportunity, please contact Susan Goodman, Program Coordinator, goodman@admin.humberc.on.ca.

Fast track to a new career.... Humber College is proud to offer UNIVERSITY GRADUATES a one year Fast Track Recreation Diploma. The program combines valuable industry traineeships with classroom theory specializing in the growing field of Recreation and Leisure Services. For more information please contact Susan Goodman, Program Coordinator: goodman@admin.humberc.on.ca.

The YMCA of Greater Vancouver - YMCA Camp Elphinstone. Waterfront Director: instructing both adults and children in waterfront programs including canoeing, kayaking, sailing, windsurfing and boardsailing. Leadership and supervision of a two-person staff team. Organization of all waterfront safety and program systems. Min. requirements: standard first aid, CPR, NLS,

operation experience. Preferred: previous camp waterfront experience, WCB Level II, NLS - oceanfront.

Water Skills Instructor: lead role for instruction and coordination of all waterfront skills instruction. Supporting the waterfront director in all aspects. Min. Requirements: standard first aid, CPR, NLS, sailing/paddling instruction. Preferred: previous camp waterfront experience, advanced sailing and paddling skills, powerboat operation experience.

Lifeguard: guarding duties of all swimming activities, supporting the waterfront director in all aspects; instruction of some paddling/sailing also required. Min. requirements: standard first aid, CPR, NLS. Preferred: previous camp waterfront experience; sailing and paddling skills.

Outtrip Coordinator: develop and manage the outtrip programs. Responsible for safety and skill development of outtrips, including risk management, emergency procedures, equipment and food preparation. Working with section directors and support staff, the outtrip program is a key focus. Min. requirements: standard first aid, CPR, Bronze Cross, Class 4 Driver, proven outtrip skills and experience. Preferred: WCB Level II, NLS, ocean paddling skills, small boat operation. Salary for these positions: \$57.20/day (\$3,088/summer). Please send résumé and cover letter to: Richard Pass - YMCA Camp Elphinstone, S-7, C-9, R.R. #1, Port Moody, B.C. V3H 3C8.

For Sale/Rent

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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 April 15th for the May 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

The views expressed by the authors in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Ontario Camping Association.



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