



# OCAsional News

The Newsletter of the Ontario Camping Association

November 2001

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## Camp in the big city

by Jeremy "Boomer" Stacey, HarbourKids Camp

Harbourfront Centre is a not-for-profit culture and arts centre located in the heart of Toronto, nestled south of the Air Canada Centre, CN Tower and SkyDome. Each year Harbourfront welcomes over three million people to facilities, spaces and galleries such as the Power Plant, the DuMaurier Theatre Centre, the Premiere Dance Theatre and the Norigen Concert Stage.

For the past four years, Harbourfront has also been my employment home: I am the Camps Co-ordinator for HarbourKids Camps, a large, diverse day camp programme that operates within Harbourfront Centre. We offer up to 27 camp programmes at a time including: creative dance (offered in conjunction with the National Ballet of Canada), sailing and sea kayaking, film animation and creative arts, sports, circus and flying trapeze. We have up to 1,000 campers a day, all organized via a central attendance system. Like many other urban day camp programmes, we offer busing and extended programming and offer a permanent on-site office.

In some ways, we are the same as any other day camp programme anywhere in Ontario. While we like to promote the glitz – visits from Toronto Blue Jay players, dance in the studios of the National Ballet, interaction with professional artists and performers –

we haven't forgotten about the basics that make camp so special: making new friends, exchanging boondoggle bracelets, singing "Purple Stew," tie dyeing still rule the day.

But running a large, urban programme in the heart of the city offers a unique set of challenges and opportunities for me, the camp staff, and our campers. For instance: we share our site on a daily basis with members of the public, who come for events like the International Festival of Authors, Milk

**Try following a young child through downtown Toronto with a shaved head and a goatee - it's pretty hard not to look suspicious.**

International Children's Festival of the Arts, and the JVC Jazz Fest. This presents many unique issues, conflicts and situations. How do you explain to a busload of foreign tourists that it's not appropriate to take pictures of those cute five-year-olds doing parachute games on the West Lawn? Try explaining a tent group singing "Purple Stew" to the retirees viewing the latest installation at the photo passage. Sometimes, it's the full-time staff at Harbourfront Centre with the raised eyebrows: "Why are your camp staff working in their

pajamas today?"

Other situations aren't quite as humorous. We have training and procedures in place for "runners": kids who feel the need to bolt off-site. In March Break 2000, a staff member and I had to follow an upset camper who made a break for the SkyDome. Try following a young child through downtown Toronto with a shaved head and a goatee – it's pretty hard not to look suspicious. Without due diligence and supervision, a camper could easily board a passing streetcar (TTC contact numbers figure prominently on our emergency list). And though it goes without saying that the water bordering our site on two sides is always a potential hazard (despite its obvious beauty), we do say it – repeatedly, with assistance from our neighbours in the Toronto Police Marine Unit.

But working in such a unique and dynamic location has its perks and advantages too. We share the waterfront with the Police Marine Unit, the Toronto Fire Department Marine Unit, Queen's Quay Yachting, Harbourfront Canoe and Kayak School and Water-side Sports Clubs, which we contract for services and programming. We're a short walk to the Toronto Music Gardens, a short bus ride to High Park,

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The official newsletter of the Ontario Camping Association, the *OCA'sional News* is published monthly from October to June of each year. The newsletter helps to keep the OCA membership informed about developments both in and out of the Association pertaining to children's, youth, and special needs camping.

Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Ontario Camping Association.

Queries regarding submissions and letters are welcome. Please direct correspondence to:

*OCA'sional News*  
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## The View from Here



Brian Blackstock,  
OCA President

The events of September 11, 2001 acted as a clarion call to many of us who thought North America was exempted from those acts of terror which so many of our fellow citizens on this planet must live with every day. Since that time, our many levels of government have reacted in many ways, from calm to chaos, from wisdom to wild miscalculations, from underreaction to overreaction.

### **One of the most important things we might do next summer is emphasize developing self-confidence.**

It was a reminder for those of us involved in children's camping that we live in a world where we can never guarantee safety, but we can certainly LOWER RISK. As we look towards another summer, perhaps it would be useful to review more closely how, at our camps, we can create a physical, social, and spiritual environment which is even better than last summer. We can ask ourselves:

- Do we have any programs where the potential physical danger is just not worth the risk?
- Can we include more kids with special needs at our camps?

- Because of changing conditions in our changing world, would it be worthwhile having a program where more of our senior campers become ACCREDITED FIRST AIDERS not only for camp but for the wider world as well?

We often include RISK MANAGEMENT as part of our staff training – would it be of value to include a more focused way with all our campers – calculating risk as a life skill? I'm sure each camp, in its unique way, can think of ways peculiar to their site and their situation where we can lower risk to campers and staff.

Some people are saying again, "This really is the worst of all possible

worlds"; certainly to some extent it may look that way, but we have been through these situations before – sometimes worse situations – and we've come out all right . . . and we will again.

One of the most important things we might do next summer is to emphasize developing SELF-CONFIDENCE in our campers and an ability to determine THE DEGREES OF DANGER, and to learn how to develop a sense of purpose and vision in a world where certainly one of the most important freedoms is FREEDOM FROM FEAR. These could be cornerstones for building FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE.

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# News from the dock/deck

by Bruce Emmerton

Forget the cold weather of the fall – let's think about those sunny summer days spent in the water! There have been some changes announced concerning the swimming programs from the Canadian Red Cross and Lifesaving Society which will apply to many of the swim decks and swim docks at camps across the province next summer.

## NEW RED CROSS LEADER AWARD

After much consultation with AquaLeader candidates, Instructors, Programmers, and Instructor-Trainers, the Red Cross will launch the new Leader Award in January 2002 which will replace AquaLeaders. The new Leader course will better prepare future swimming Instructors with a strong emphasis on aquatic skills, learn-to-swim progressions, and aquatic leadership. To prepare for the 2002 season, take note of the following:

1. Instructors who wish to teach the new Leader Program will need to take and pass a 20-hour Trainer Clinic. These clinics are offered at facilities across the province and taught by Master Instructor-Trainers. If you currently offer the AquaLeader program at camp, you will want to encourage your senior swim staff to take this clinic before the summer season.

2. The assistant teaching hours are now part of the Leader Program, which means they must be completed before the end of the course. In addition to course requirements, each candidate must complete a set of assignments and at least 15 hours of assistant teaching hours.

The AquaLeader course will be phased out in April 2002. Further information on the revised Leader program is on page 9 of the new fall issue of the Red Cross Leadership magazine or you can contact the Red Cross at: 1-888-890-1997.

## NEW LIFESAVING SOCIETY FIRST AID AWARDS

Many camps and pools are already offering the new First Aid awards, which were officially launched by the Lifesaving Society in September. To be consistent with WSIB regulations, the Society's Junior Resuscitation, Senior Resuscitation, and Aquatic Emergency Care awards have been updated to Basic, Emergency, and Standard First Aid awards respectively. They have also added CPR, AED, and Airway Management courses. What does this mean to camps?

1. You have First Aid Instructors already on staff: Your current Lifesaving Instructors may teach and evaluate Emergency First Aid, CPR "A" and CPR "B" awards.

An Examiner will no longer be necessary for Emergency First Aid exams (the former Senior Resuscitation). AEC Instructors can teach Standard First Aid and CPR-C.

2. No water is required: The new first aid program is not restricted to aquatic candidates. You can use the Lifesaving Society's first aid awards to train and certify all camp staff and your campers – these certifications are recognized by the WSIB.

3. Easy conversion: Staff members who hold Emergency or Standard First Aid and CPR certifications from another recognized agency can recertify in a Lifesaving Society First Aid or CPR recert.

You can get more information about the Society's new First Aid Programs by calling the Ontario Branch Office at 416-490-8844, or by visiting their web site at [www.lifesavingsociety.com](http://www.lifesavingsociety.com).

*Bruce Emmerton is the Director of the Trent Summer Sports Camp, and volunteers as a Master Instructor-Trainer with the Red Cross, and is the Lifesaving Society's Area Co-Chair for the Kawartha-Haliburton region. He can be reached at 705-748-1670. (with files from the Canadian Red Cross and Lifesaving Society)*



Assistant Ropes Course Instructor	Oct 12-15
Ropes Course Instructor	Oct 19-22
Advanced Ropes Course Rescue	Nov 9-11
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Therapeutic Applications	Feb 1-3
Wilderness First Responder	Dec 1-9
Rigging for Rescue Seminar	Nov 18-24

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# Conference Corner

**OCA Conference 2002  
February 14th-16th  
Sheraton Parkway North**

Hello, everyone! Now that we're all back in the swing of things after a busy summer, it's time to start thinking about the OCA's Annual Conference. **MARK IT IN YOUR CALENDAR!** The conference program is shaping up very nicely! Thanks to everyone on our many committees and sub-committees for all their assistance.

## **The Program will Feature:**

- **3 Educational Streams – Risk, Customer, Staff**
- Over 70 breakout sessions over 3 days, with Provincial, National, and International Speakers
- Kindred Group Sessions where you can network with those involved in similar camping organizations
- The Saturday Educational Forum for Camp Directors, Program Directors, Section and Specialty Heads, and other front-line staff and volunteers - featuring 16 hands on sessions
- All-day Round Tables for: Office Administrators, Site Managers, Food Managers, and Members of Volunteer Boards
- A pre-Conference Basic Camp Directors Workshop with Jeff Bradshaw on February 13th
- An Exhibit Hall filled with new and returning camp suppliers
- The OCA Annual General Meeting on Friday night
- The ever-popular Saturday Night Banquet
- Hospitality events planned for you by our energetic Hospitality Committee, with regular socials and receptions in the President's Suite, and an optional downtown Toronto "tourist excursion"
- Two hotels in one with two different rates and lots of free parking

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**COMING SOON!**

## **Keynote Speakers (so far):**

### **Chris Martyn**

from Ipsos-Reid will discuss the nationwide Camping Survey results

### **Ron Kinnamon**

Chairman of the Character Counts Coalition, a non-partisan, nonsectarian coalition of schools, communities and nonprofit organizations working to advance character education by teaching the Six Pillars of Character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship

### **Michael Brandwein**

International Educator & Camping Speaker Extraordinaire

## **Other Speakers (so far):**

### **Jay Frankel**

Camp Staff Trainer, and President and Founder of True To Life Training

### **Steve Cony**

President, Communication Counsellors, LLC

### **Bruce Muchnick, Ed.D.**

Licensed psychologist who works extensively with day and resident camps and an expert in Crisis Response

### **Ed Shirick**

Shirick & Associates Insurance Brokers, Inc., a new company that focuses on serving children's camps and conference centres as well as other organizations serving children

### **Nancy Brown**

CCA Insurance Broker

### **Debra Pepler, Ph. D., C.Psych**

Professor of Psychology at York University and Director of the LaMarsh Centre for Research on Violence and Conflict Resolution

### **Dr. Mickey Lester**

Consulting Pediatrician for the Hospital for Sick Children, Camp Doctor – Camp White Pine, host of CFRB's "The Doctor is in the House"

### **Jim McHardy**

Director, Kinark Outdoor Centre – expert in therapeutic recreation and child mental health

### **Lori Prospero**

Provincial Chairperson for the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with Disabilities

### **Joey Rich**

Child & adolescent therapist, CITY-TV regular guest

### **Plus**

- Many of our own OCA Members
- At least three Provincial Camping Association Presidents
- Delegates from Camping Associations in Australia

## Campfire of Inclusions: *Staff Burnout*

It has come to the Committee's attention that many camps are experiencing staff burnout when it comes to servicing campers with special needs. We wondered how many camps out there would like to include campers with special needs but are concerned about staff resources? Are you concerned about this? Have you found out what works for your camp?

We'd love to hear from you and brainstorm together - Please join us at "Campfire of Inclusions 2002" on Wednesday, February 13th, 2002 from 7 to 9 in the evening - the evening before the 2002 OCA Annual Conference begins.

The "Campfire of Inclusions" will be held at the Conference location, the Sheraton Parkway North in Richmond Hill.

We have a great line up of hot topics - the more people who can join us for this informative networking session, the more ideas to be generated! Hope to see you there!

**Q:** What is an RPN?

**A:** An RPN is a registered practical nurse licensed with the College of Nurses.

To find out more, attend the Health Care Round Table on Saturday afternoon February 16, 2002 at the Annual Conference.

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# Canada-wide standards for camping

by John Jorgenson, Past President, CCA/ACC

This past October, camping in Canada took a concerted step forward in the ongoing effort to present a common vision of camping to the public, the government and to itself. Representatives of the Standards and Accreditation Committees of the eight Federated Members of the CCA/ACC met in Saskatchewan with the presidents of the associations to discuss their respective programs.

The project was initiated this year because, for the first time, all eight provincial camping associations that are members of the CCA/ACC have established a full set of accreditation programs and documents – providing the basis for some groundbreaking and wide-ranging discussions on the subject of standards, accreditation, liability, insurance, crisis response and other associated provincial responsibilities.

The Project Development Fund of the CCA/ACC, with support from Hugh Wood Insurance, funded the project, which was held in conjunction with the biannual Presidents' Council meeting at the Quest, a Camp/Retreat

Centre on Christopher Lake in Saskatchewan.

Jill Vandal, a partner in the Tourism Company, facilitated the two-day exercise. Prior to the meeting, she assembled some background material on programs currently in place. The standards and programs of the eight provincial members were submitted for a comparative study. Tables were prepared that outlined the accreditation process and the basic content of each standards package.

At the outset, the group acknowledged that the workshop was not intended to create national standards. Neither did we wish to require any province to comply with a national program on the subject of accreditation. Instead, the meetings were designed to share, educate and discuss issues and strategies in accreditation. There was an early and ready recognition that all provinces have much to share, much to learn and many common concerns, challenges and approaches.

Topics in the area of process included application/entry, cycle/frequency of visits, standards visitor pro-

file, minimum requirements, and style/response of questions.

In addition to discussions on each of these topics, the provinces took the opportunity to examine and evaluate the actual materials associated with standards. Delegates considered the formatting, binding, user-friendliness, response sheets and other aspects of the programs. They raised and discussed such questions as visitors training programs, visitor compensation, complaint procedures, abuse protocols, criminal record checks, crisis response protocols, response assessment and possible CCA support roles.

The group examined specific standards with an eye to determining whether there are common statements that can be made about all accredited camps in Canada. Besides the recognition that there is plenty of common ground built into the intent of our various standards, every province recognized a wealth of new language and approaches to defining these topics. In both the short- and long-term, committees can consider what rewording,

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re-defining or revamping is most appropriate for their province.

Besides the outstanding sharing of information, ideas and resources that emerged from the workshop, a network of standards-related consultation has been established and a set of projects have emerged for consideration by the CCA/ACC. These project proposals include developing language for marketing the common features of all accredited camps, presenting CCA/ACC statements on "How to Select the Right Camp for Your Child," promoting the value of high standards and accreditation to the camping community at large, assembling CCA/ACC-generated insurance data for camps and future workshops on this and other topics.

As a result of the meeting, CCA/ACC has committed to set up an electronic exchange area for an ongoing conversation amongst standards representatives, assembling a resource pack-

age of active and current research and conducting both immediate and long-term evaluations of the impact of the workshop. Furthermore, Presidents' Council has been charged with a number of other tasks:

- to present a CCA/ACC media package for use in marketing the benefits of accredited camping to the public;
- to assemble insurance industry case studies and articles for work by PCAs with camps;
- to develop a framework for standards that lays out common areas, formats, communications and web links to standards currently available on-line;
- to develop a roadmap for accreditation to move new and existing camps through the accreditation /education process in their respective provinces;
- to design a national workshop model that could effectively train

visitors in key topics related to accreditation.

For more information about the efforts of this workshop and the work of the Standards Committees in your province, please contact CCA/ACC or your provincial PCA office.

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Contact Lisa Wilson at Camp Oconto at 905-470-2030

*Camp in the City,  
continued from page 1*

Riverdale Farm and Ashbridges Bay Park, and a short ferry ride to the Toronto Islands. We're minutes away from many of the country's best medical facilities including Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children.

Camping in the city is also a great opportunity to expose children and staff to different arts and cultures. In summer 2000, campers watched visiting Buddhist monks create a traditional sand mandala. Some campers were invited to participate in the press release extravaganza for Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling; for their efforts, they were given front-row seating for her record-breaking Toronto reading. Many parents take the opportunity to stay down on a Friday night after picking campers up to catch one of the many festivals, concerts and performances offered here on-site every weekend during the summer. Transforming the site each weekend from a camp to a huge themed festival, and then back to a camp early Monday morning, is a whole other challenge – and another story.

*Jeremy "Boomer" Stacey is the Camps Co-ordinator for HarbourKids Camps at Harbourfront Centre in Toronto.*



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**WHERE: The Sheraton  
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