

Let's beat the flu!

BY THE OCA HEALTHCARE COMMITTEE

Q. What is the availability of flu vaccine for people in Ontario?

A. As in the previous year, all Ontarians will be eligible for the publicly funded vaccine during the 2003-04 season.

Since the 2000-01 season, influenza vaccine has been available for all Ontarians. Annual influenza immunization, for healthy working adults, has been shown to decrease work absenteeism from respiratory illness, as well as transmission to vulnerable populations.

Q. What is the flu?

A. Influenza, the flu, is caused by a virus. People who get the flu typically have an abrupt onset of fever, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, cough, and weakness, usually lasting two to seven days. The cough and weakness can last for up to six weeks. Often this makes physical activity and even day-to-day activity difficult.

Each year, on average, 25% of Canadians get the flu. Most people who get the flu will not

get seriously ill. The flu, however, can make it easier to come down with other health problems such as pneumonia, can worsen heart and lung conditions, or can help cause a disease in children known as Reye's Syndrome that can affect the brain and kidneys. Complications from these other health problems may even cause death in some people, usually those who are older and frail.

Q. Who's at risk?

A. Everyone is at risk of getting the flu but for the following people, it can be more serious: anyone 65 years of age or older; anyone living or working in long-term care facilities; anyone suffering from chronic heart, lung, or kidney disease; anyone with diabetes, cancer, immune system problems, or red blood cell problems including anemia; children or teenagers who have been treated with acetylsalicylic acid (ASA) for long periods.

Anyone who works in a facility or lives in a household with someone who has any of the above conditions should be immunized to prevent spreading the flu.

Q. Why promote the flu shot every year?

A. The influenza virus changes each year, so a different

*see Let's beat the flu!
continued on page 8*

Flashbulb moments from the campfire to the canoe dock

BY PETER McMAHON, OCAsional NEWS EDITOR

As a journalist, I often see life in a series of "flashbulb moments" – those life-altering split seconds where time seems to stand still and we remember every detail for posterity.

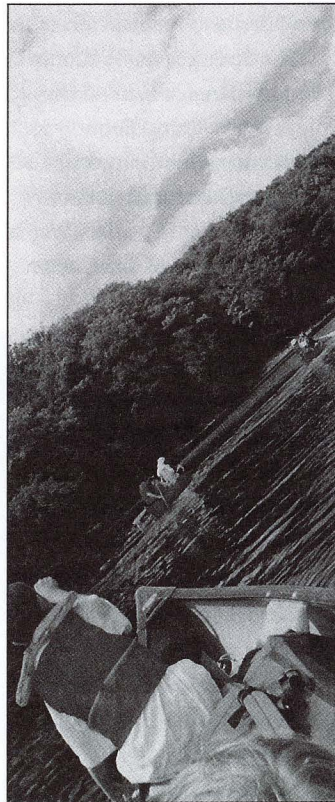
In the news, those moments aren't always pleasant: 9/11, the first volley of U.S. missiles during the second war in Iraq, the

destruction of the space shuttle Columbia.

It's depressing to realize that those dark moments took me only seconds to think of. But after an hour of brain wracking, I still can't come up with a positive moment that rivaled those first examples in capturing the attention of the world.

For me, though, there are a slew of positive flashbulb moments far more powerful than any stories of war and unrest. You'll be glad to find out that almost all of them have come out of my experiences working at and attending summer camps.

At Camp Kawartha, I remember designing a Batman theme day (the same month Batman Forever came out in theatres) complete with soundtrack (there were stereos at each activity station), costumes (we stayed up all night making the leather Batman cowl,) and a plot worthy of being the next movie sequel (not much of a stretch, in retrospect). When Batman showed up in a lunchtime skit with the mask, a



*see Flashbulb moments
continued on page 3*





The View From Here

BY BRIAN BLACKSTOCK,
OCA PRESIDENT

Our Association is a fine example of a "work in progress." During the summer and early fall, many of our very able and committed members have been at work planning events and preparing reports for the year ahead. Each one of these can add to our knowledge and ability to make our camps better places to help our campers and staff develop their skills and selves. Here are some of them:

- The Directors' Conference Committee, headed by the unstoppable leadership of Jill Dundas (who was recently appointed Acting Executive Director of Ontario Girl Guides; congratulations Jill!), has developed a program which will address many of the concerns relevant to camping today, including a "mock trial" led by a professional legal team. The Conference dates are February 19-21, 2004.
- Jill's Educational Events Task Force has recommended the addition of a 16th Board position: Education Events Director, who will supervise and co-ordinate all OCA educational events. Adding this position requires a change in the OCA constitution; the OCA membership will vote on this change at the Annual General Meeting in February.
- A Workshop for New Camp Directors – On February 17th and 18th, 2004 (the two days before the Annual Conference), Jane

McCutcheon (Think Muskoka Inc.) and Jeff Bradshaw (Camp Wenonah) will lead a workshop to assist members who have recently become camp directors become more familiar with and better able to handle their responsibilities.

- The Skills Weekend, chaired by Brian Shelley (R.K.Y. Camp), will again offer staff an opportunity to become more proficient in activities of special interest in a camp setting.
- Our second Facilities & Maintenance Conference will be held on March 24th-26th, 2004. Chaired by David Sheffe (Camp Manitou), the conference will include a food services stream. Last year's conference was very well-received and there was a strong demand for another.
- The Spring Training (Counsellor) Conference chaired by Don Kembal (Camp Robin Hood) will give an opportunity for new and experienced staff to better their skills as camp leaders. Watch for future notices of what, when and where.
- The Health Care Workshop led by the Healthcare Committee is increasingly important as some of our camps are having to adjust to the changing conditions in delivering quality health care to our campers and camps.
- The Standards Review Task Force co-chaired by Howard Oretsky (Individual Member) and Craig Hartley (Centauri Summer Arts Camp) have spent hundreds of hours drawing together ideas from dozens of camp leaders and are now putting the final touches (and grammatical corrections, thanks Catherine Ross!) to the first group of recommendations to be presented to the membership this year.

- The Standards Committee has completed the review of the over 100 camps visited this summer. Thanks to all the visited camps for your co-operation and your suggestions. Karen Gordon (Camp Towhee) has done a fine job as chair, but has decided to step down because of her other responsibilities at camp and the increasing challenges of raising three young children. Thank you Karen – your thoroughness, thoughtfulness and follow-up skills are most appreciated.

- Dave Graham (OCA Vice President, Camp Kandalore) will be off to Halifax on November 21 to attend the CCA Presidents' Council where national concerns will be addressed.

- The OCA now has a permanent representative to the board of the Ontario Recreational Canoeing Association (ORCA). Our board confirmed Robin Squires (OCA Vice President, R.K.Y. Camp) to this position at our last meeting. Communication between the OCA and ORCA has not been "as good as it gets" lately so this should help resolve that.

- Our Eastern Ontario representative to the Board, Ian Richardson (formerly Camp Arrowhead) has sold the camp (congratulations to Pat Birnie who has just bought it!). He has therefore resigned his position. It is with pleasure that on behalf of the Board, I welcome Jeff Brown (Camp Otterdale) to fill this position.

- The public awareness of the value of sending children to OCA camps continues to climb. Special thanks to Public Awareness Chair Duncan Robertson (Onondaga Camp) for the very good job he continues to do in this area.

- Membership continues to grow steadily. We now have over 320 camps. Polly Hodgetts Marston (Hurontario) and Kim Mitchell (OCA Membership Secretary) have some good plans to add several more over the coming year.

- The Human Resources Committee under the indefatigable leadership of Chair Patti Thom (Camp Tanamakoon) continues to find excellent people to help in those areas of our Association that need help and to organize "gatherings" where matters of immediate concern to our camps can be addressed.

As you can see (if you've read this far) this is a very active Association. Largely it is run by volunteers – as I said at the beginning, very able and committed volunteers. There are many rewards to being one, both experientially and socially. If you would like to help, please call the OCA office; a staff person will put you in touch with someone on the Human Resources Committee. Volunteers past, present and, I'm confident, in the future will determine the quality of our Association. What this Association is today is largely due to them.

And, speaking of volunteers in another capacity as we approach November 11th, we need to remember. As Robert Dole, the former U.S. Senator who was severely wounded in World War II, said, "We owe all our veterans this ... TO PRESERVE THEIR MEMORY AGAINST THE TIDES OF TIME."

"Lest we forget."



*Flashbulb moments
continued from page 1*

batman t-shirt, garbage bag cape, and Texas, we brought the house down, and set the stage for an awesome theme day. Come to think of it, I think what I loved most about coming up with camp skits and theme days is the same thing I love now about producing video for TV and the Internet.

There were so many other flashbulb moments at Kawartha – like when one of my junior boy campers made the Freudian slip of calling me “Dad” (it was also the first time I considered what it would be like to actually be a parent), and the sailing beach candlelight ceremony at the end of the last session of my last year there.

In 1997, I joined the staff of Camp Arowhon in Algonquin Park. What I remembered most there wasn’t my daily job on the waterfront, as head of kayaking, but the raw beauty of the camp, the park, and the many surprises nature had in store for us. My favorite moment that summer was watching the August meteor shower from Arowhon’s giant canoe docks. Half the staff (of 100) showed up after the kids were asleep, and the magical grace of shooting stars that night put a very hairy summer in perspective.

Camp Couchiching is the camp I most think of as home. It’s the one I still return to again and again, with a strong connection to the land and the people. Cooch was also the last camp I worked at and the one with which my favorite memories are associated.

I remember vividly the first time I watched fireworks there on

Canada Day, accompanied by an overwhelming feeling that this – above all – was a place where I could make a difference.

I remember my first day teaching a landslide of kids that showed up for a new program I created there.

And I remember watching a hilarious nine-year-old in a camp play. I later became that camper’s godfather.

Now I work in the “real world” – luckily enough, in an office environment that’s as close as is possible to the fun and warmth of summer camp. If that wasn’t enough, I even get to keep in touch with the camping community through my small business, helping – I hope – to make that community a better place.

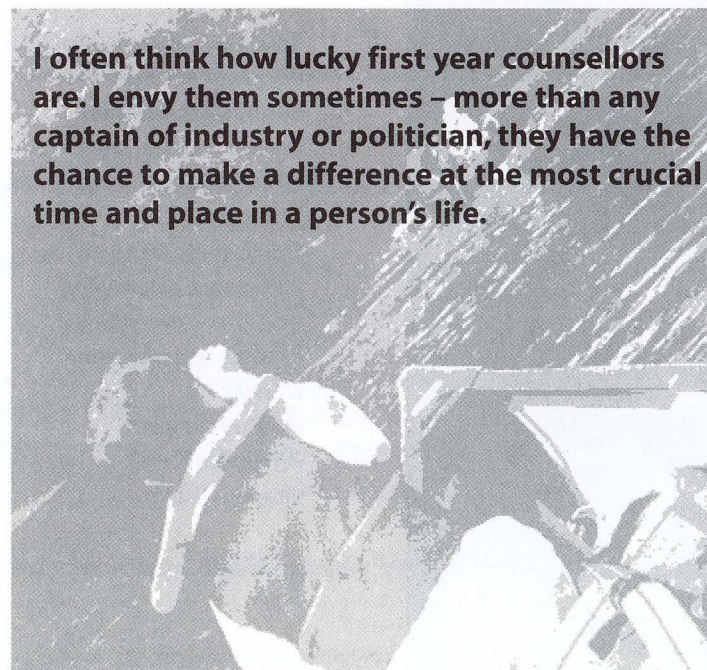
I’d like to think I still do as much good today as I had the chance to do at summer camp. I often think how lucky first year counsellors are. I envy them sometimes – more than any cap-

tain of industry or politician, they have the chance to make a difference at the most crucial time and place in a person’s life.

For what it’s worth, I want to say thank you to all the directors and counselors and kids who made summer camp the teaching and learning experience of my life.

It’s because of camp that – as I stroll down halls of steel and glass on very grown-up business – I try to find ways every day to keep my attitude rooted in a land of sing-alongs and canoe lessons, and my heart looking for the next great flashbulb memory to share around the campfire.

Peter McMahon is the new editor of the OCAasional News. He is also an online host and producer for Discovery Channel Canada and founder of North Star Science and Astronomy Programming – an OCA Commercial Member. He can be reached at pmcmahon@ctv.ca.



I often think how lucky first year counsellors are. I envy them sometimes – more than any captain of industry or politician, they have the chance to make a difference at the most crucial time and place in a person’s life.

Do you have something to share?

The Ontario Camp Leadership Workshop (OCLW) is currently seeking people interested in presenting at our 49th annual conference. The OCLW will be held at YMCA Camp Pinecrest from June 3rd to June 6th, 2004.

The OCLW is looking for people who can present sessions that will help prepare Directors and Senior Staff for the summer ahead. We are looking for sessions on a variety of topics including, but not limited to: integration, staff training & management, and games & activities. If you are interested in presenting please email a small outline of your session to info@oclw.ca. We will look over all of the proposals. Thank you.

OCLW Committee 2004

PRO 2003 Part-Time Wage Survey now available

If you are responsible for hiring part time staff, then the Parks and Recreation Ontario Part-Time Wage Survey will be a great resource for you. Information was collected from more than 150 Ontario municipalities and agencies for various positions including aquatics, parks, arenas, community centres and day camps. Check out a sample of the survey results and download the survey order form from the PRO web site: www.prontario.org.

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Day Camp Workshop a success

BY LYNDA FISHMAN, BAYVIEW GLEN DAY CAMP

An all-day OCA Day Camp Workshop was held on Thursday, October 16th. Feedback from the 44 participants has been extremely positive. The Workshop evolved out of the idea that day camp directors and senior staff could benefit from the opportunity to meet during the fall and discuss common issues that relate specifically to day camps.

Robyn Hochglaube (Green Acres) and Lynda Fishman (Bayview Glen) were delighted to organize the day in the hopes of providing the opportunity to share, learn, network and tour two day camps.

The morning was spent at Richmond Hill Country Club Day Camp, with a panel of three lawyers: Edward Prutschi, Jeffrey Gerstl and Lance Lehman. The panel briefly addressed some of the following issues and how they specifically relate to day camps:

- Conditions of enrollment
- Copyright infringement
- Custody/Access issues
- Dealing with the unexpected cancellation of days
- Documentation
- Employment Standards Act
- Importance of following through on everything listed in policy and procedure manuals
- Industry standards
- Permission forms
- Vicarious liability

The afternoon session was at the Toronto Montessori Camp in Bolton, with a parent panel. The parents on the panel had a round-table discussion facilitated by a professional mediator. Workshop participants eavesdropped on their discussion related to the criteria they consider when making a decision about or evaluating a day camp. The consensus among the panel was that safety is the number-one criteria. The parents discussed the importance to each of them, of the following criteria:

- Activities
- Air Conditioning / Indoor Facilities
- Customer service
- Designated lunch area
- Experience
- Friends
- Insect repellent policy
- Instructional swim
- Leadership/Director
- Location
- Lunches
- Peanut policy
- Price
- Reputation
- Siblings at the same camp
- Staff
- Sunscreen policy
- Transportation provided

Overall, the day was successful. We hope that this sort of workshop, specific to day camps, becomes an annual event.



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FILLING THE CAMP DIRECTOR'S TOOLBOX FOR OVER 70 YEARS



Adèle Statten Ebbs 1909 - 2003

BY SUSAN EBBS

Adèle Statten arrived at the all-boys Central Toronto "Y" Camp Couchiching soon after her birth in the summer of 1909. Thus began her camping career, living in a tent each summer at Couchiching until 1921 and in a teepee for the Statten family's holidays in September on Canoe Lake until 1916 when they built a cabin. She was enveloped by her father Taylor Statten's fervent belief in the potential for positive character development in all young people and was continuously introduced to people who shared, challenged and helped shape his theories and methods: Edmison, McCulley, Blackstock, Dimock, Hendry, Haydon. By the time Taylor Statten founded

Camp Ahmek in 1921 he was on his way to evolving from the then evangelical and militaristic tone of the "Y" to a more humanist approach to dealing with campers and staff. Adèle witnessed and remembered her father's experimentation with various theories so that by the time she became senior staff at Camp Wapomeo in the late 1920's she was melding her own ideas with his and others. She too surrounded herself with senior staff and friends who challenged her and introduced different perspectives on leadership and young people: Ruby Smith, Nora Bailey, Mary Northway. She had also entered into a partnership with a young medical student and protégé of Taylor Statten, Harry Ebbs, who became her husband in 1935. Paediatric medicine and a mutual love for children's camping made a dynamic match. Even beyond their retirement from Camp Wapomeo and the Taylor Statten Camps in 1975 Adèle and Harry

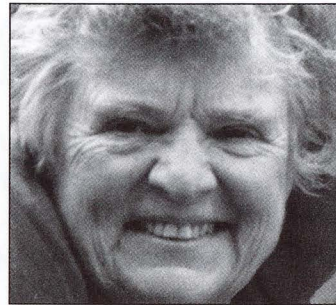
never stopped listening, learning, teaching and sharing.

The entire camping community, and especially the OCA, was always a source of great pride and fun for the Ebbs. They were of the generation of camp directors who learned from the trials of the pioneers: Cochrane, Statten, Hamilton, Plewman, Halliday, Edgar, Walton, Johnston, Chapman, and then sustained their enthusiasm and progressiveness from the energy and visions of the younger crowd: Latimer, Lowes, Labbett, Johnstone, Pearse, Whipper, Gilchrist. With the latter they were instrumental in presenting children's

camp directing to the world as a respected profession in the field of education and leadership training through the formation of the Society of Camp Directors.

Adèle's philosophy on camping, children and leadership remains relevant today:

There is a type of education that our children are going to need – physical fitness, good food, fresh air, hard physical work, opportunities for adventure, for pioneering. There should be chances for young people to strike out on their own, to have the thrill of exploring. Some of the adventures should be rigorous, and take courage; only in this way can the feeling of independence be experienced. Even though this great band of young people has to be dependent and non-productive financially for some years to come, it is never too early for them to learn to stand on their own feet and accept the consequences of their own behaviour. Camp can do this.



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A tribute to the life of Madelene Ferguson Allen

BY HOLLY HEIBEIN AND JACQUI RAILL, CAMP OUAREAU

The Camp Ouareau community, the Ontario Camping Association and the Quebec Camping Association were deeply saddened by the passing of Madelene Ferguson "Ferg" Allen on August 13, 2003, after a short battle with liver cancer. During her years at Camp Ouareau she touched many lives, and the community will miss her greatly. She is survived by her husband of 38 years, Robin Allen and her two children Brenda and Bruce.

Ferg started her camping career at Ouareau as a 17-year-old counsellor, with Joyce Bertram as the director. She had only come to Ouareau for one year, but she was captured by the magic we call Ouareau. Throughout the next decade, Ferg climbed through the ranks of Ouareau staff, growing both as a leader and as a skilled outdoor enthusiast. The stories of her early days as a camp counsellor recall a fun-loving young woman who loved pranks, who appreciated a good gunwale bobbing race, and who created and led many lively camp programs and singsongs. She purchased the camp at the young age of 28. She was a tireless worker, inevitably putting the needs of Ouareau before her own.

Ferg introduced both the bilingual program and the two-

week program. She managed to implement these major changes while maintaining the integrity of the original values and traditions Mabel Jameson and Ferna Halliday established back in 1922 – a feat that not only enabled camp to survive during challenging political and economic times, but provided the framework for its current success. Through the creation of the Dorothy Percival Fund, and Ferg's personal generosity, many campers attended camp who would otherwise have not been able to. The reward? The knowledge that a little girl would (and will) be able to enjoy herself at Ouareau.

After the death of her adoptive parents in the 1980s, Ferg became an active advocate of adoptee's rights. After seven years of facing many dead ends, slammed doors and political red tape that would discourage most people, she found her birth family, which she discovered reside in the Midland area. As a result, a second career as a writer emerged, with the publication of her first book called *Reunion: Search for my Birth Family*. She also wrote the *Adoptee Searcher's Handbook*, which provided valuable information for readers searching for their own birth families. She compiled a much loved book called *The Book of Bymph*, a collection of stories written over several decades by three of Camp Ouareau's directors.

Her writing and research continued; she wrote another book called *Wake of the Invercauld*, which was the namesake of her company, Invercauld Publications. Most recently, Madelene put her writing/publishing skills to good use as the editor of the



OCA newsletter, the OCA'sional News. She served on the OCA Standards Committee and the Conference Committee. Ferg and Robin "retired" from camping when they sold the camp to the current owners, Jacqui and Don Raill in 2002.

When news of Ferg's death spread throughout the Camp Ouareau community, memories, stories and words of comfort flooded the staff/alumnae mes-

sage board on the Ouareau web site – fittingly, the same website that Ferg created and lovingly monitored as its webmaster. These messages expressed the widespread impact that Ferg had on the lives of the young women who were part of a magical place to which Ferg left a lasting legacy. Last May, Ferg wrote in an email:

"If I had, had a life of working in a factory putting widgets into square holes, I should feel cheated. But I have had a life doing the things I loved with the people I loved. It is not the length of a life that counts, it is the quality."

Thank you Ferg, for all that you have given to us. Go well and safely. We shall miss you.



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Let's beat the flu! continued from page 1

vaccine has to be used each year too. Also, the protection from the vaccine wears off after about six months so people need a new shot yearly.

Doctors and scientists around the world determine the strains of influenza virus that are circulating, and the vaccine is then prepared to protect against the most common strains each year.

There is another reason to get the flu shot this year in particular: SARS and the flu share many of the same symptoms. If someone shows these symptoms, diagnosing their ailment as SARS will be easier for doctors if they know the person has received the flu shot.

Q. Can anyone get a shot?

A. Everyone six months of age or older, who is not allergic to a component of the vaccine

can get the shot. The cost of the flu shot is covered by the government. People who are allergic to eggs, thimerosal, neomycin or gelatin should NOT receive the vaccine. Children under the age of nine who have never been vaccinated for the flu need two shots, one month apart, to get the best protection. Anyone already diagnosed as being infected with the flu virus should wait until they are completely recovered before receiving their shot. The flu shot is safe for pregnant women and women breastfeeding young infants. Anyone with a history of Guillan-Barré Syndrome should consult their doctor before receiving a shot.

Q. Where can I get the free flu shot?

A. At your public health office, through your employer, at your community clinic, or at your doctor's office.

Q. Is the flu shot safe?

A. The flu shot is very safe. People may have some pain at the spot where they get their needle which can last up to two days. Some people may get muscle aches, a low-grade fever, or feel tired for a day or two after getting the shot. The vaccine cannot give you the flu because it does not contain live flu virus. Influenza vaccine has been associated with a temporary neurological condition called Guillain-Barré Syndrome at less than one in a million doses.

This article was adapted from the "Statement on Influenza Vaccination for the 2003-2004 Season" by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), published in the Canadian Communicable Diseases Report, Vol. 29 (15 August, 2003). For more information on flu and the flu shot, call 1-866-358-6968, or visit www.health.gov.on.ca or www.toronto.ca/health/flu.

Standards Review update

BY HOWARD ORETSKY,
 CO-CHAIR, OCA STANDARDS REVIEW TASK FORCE

Hello there! We hope you had a successful summer and that all is well for the coming summer of 2004. Though the Standards Review Task Force did not meet over the summer, we were still very busy with the project.

As Co-Chair, I had the opportunity to visit several camps to pilot the first four sections. A heartfelt thank you to each of my director hosts for your hospitality, time and effort in helping the Standards revision process along. As I write this update the Task Force is in the process of completing the suggested revisions

to parts 1 to 4; these chapters should soon be in the Board's hands and hopefully to the membership for ratification early in 2004.

The Task Force will work with the Board to define the next chapters of the Guidelines to be revised and membership input will continue to be an integral part of this process.

Craig and I invite you to comment on any and all parts of the project by email: howardo@interlog.com and directors@centauri.on.ca.

OCAsional News

The Ontario Camping Association publishes the OCA's official newsletter, the OCAsional News, monthly from October to June of each year. The newsletter keeps OCA members informed about developments in children's, youth, and special needs camping, both within and outside of the Association. Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Ontario Camping Association.

The editor of the OCAsional News, Peter McMahon, welcomes letters to the editor as well as queries regarding submissions. Please contact Peter at pmcmahon@ctv.ca.

Advertisers may purchase display ads at single or multiple insertion rates. There is an additional fee of \$50.00 for non-members. Contact the OCA office for information regarding sizes and rates. The OCAsional News also accepts classified ads: the rate for OCA members is \$20 for the first 25 words and \$15 for each additional 25 words. For non-OCA members, the rate is \$35 for the first 25 words and \$30 for each additional 25 words. Paid advertising space will not exceed editorial content.

Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education is not; the world is full of educated failures. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.

Calvin Coolidge

submitted by Bert Danson



Camp Facilities and Maintenance Services Conference 2004

Topics under consideration:

- Camp vehicles/motorized watercraft: needs, repair, environmental impact
- Ropes course: design, elements, gear
- Current water issues: regulations, systems, costs, contractors
- Sewage: regulations, systems, costs, contractors, toilets (traditional vs compost)
- Garbage: hazardous waste, landfill issues, costs
- Housekeeping vs maintenance: finding the balance
- Construction stream
 - stick, modular - wood, log, metal, maintenance-free
 - plumbing, electrical, roads, landscaping
 - forest management issues
- Food Service Stream
 - kitchen design, equipment, staff
 - serving procedures
 - hands-on experience in the kitchen
 - ordering
 - health regulations
 - management systems
 - inventory controls
 - storage
 - human resources (part-time and full-time)
- Full facility management: what it means, systems, inventory, cost savings
- How-to sessions on:
 - Hitches
 - Carburetor repairs
 - Log construction
 - Paints and varnishes
 - Small engine repairs
 - Fibreglassing canoes
- OCA Standards, Province's perspective, impact
- Today's Site Managers and Service Staff: who are they, their role on the staff team and what they need to know

More than 100 delegates enjoyed and learned from our most successful conference in 2003. Our delegates requested that the OCA Board endorse the Conference for 2004 AND THEY HAVE. The Conference will once again have the following features:

- a three-day conference held March 24-26, 2004
- New for 2004: the possibility of pre-conference certificate courses, such as water management or food handling
- reasonable rates
- an opportunity for some of our Commercial Members to exhibit and participate at a reasonable rate for all or part of the conference
- at an OCA Accredited camp whose site will be open to view and offer discussions about the development of its facilities and kitchen
- Quality speakers
- Break-out sessions
- Keynote address
- Food Management Stream

Watch for time and dates. We encourage your comments, topic suggestions and concerns. Please contact the Planning Committee through Kim Mitchell in the OCA Office at membership@ontcamp.on.ca or at 416-485-0425.