

Alumni Newsletter

Canoe Tripping - A John Island Cornerstone



***"Old trippers never die...
they just leave no trace!"***

When John Island Camp opened in 1954, there were 6 cedar-strip canoes to service the canoeing needs of the camp for the next several years. It did not take long, however, for the adventure aspect

of camping to grab hold and canoeing instruction and tripping to begin. Today, a fleet of 50 canoes are constantly coming and going with over 30 canoe trips a summer and over 1,200 kilometres of paddling.

In this edition of the Alumni Newsletter, we are featuring a

series of articles chronicling the history of tripping at John Island. We hope they bring back memories. We know you will enjoy Jeremy Mahood's recollection of the famous John Island Wilderness trip from camp to Sault Ste. Marie back half a century ago. Mary Waddell (Mathers) recalls a tripping experience over a decade later. Daphne Loukidelis has recruited a few fellow staff from mid-way through John Island's history to share some unbelievable experiences from a sailing trip to the Benji's. Colin Veevers was a leader on two trips on the Seal River in Northern Manitoba back about 10 years ago and Chris Jackson tells of a 2010 trip on the Missinaubi River that still has campers and staff talking and sharing memories.

We hope you enjoy all of these great tales of tripping at John Island over the past years, as we continue to prepare for the 58th season of tripping memories. See you next summer!

It's About Time.....

After an unknown number of years sitting lifeless on the chimney of the John Island fireplace, the old wooden clock was recently brought back to life. No, we're not giving you the gears – it is really working! It has longer hands, a steady ticker, a chubby face and enough dimples to cause the most serious person to chuckle. But it works and works well, giving us a full sixty seconds every minute.

But, we don't know when the original round, smoke encrusted clock first found its perch on the fireplace. We don't know where it came from or who made it. But we would sure like to know. So the plea is going out for information. If you can help us, please let us know what you know about the clock. Send us an e-mail at:

gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca and give us the facts. But don't wait.....time is running out! Next spring the clock will be returned to its proper place above the fireplace.



**HAPPY HOLIDAYS
FROM
JOHN ISLAND CAMP!**

HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION - PART TWO

SUNSHINE.....

by Pete Kerigan - Current John Island Camp Director

Sunshine. To sum up how this past summer came and went, it would be sunshine. From the weather, to the kids, to the staff - it seemed that everything and everyone kept on shining. The sun began to shine in the Spring with the successful completion of "new" Aird cabin and a well-attended Alumni/Volunteer Work Weekend. With over 25 schools and 600 students enjoying the site, our 57th season on the Island was off to a great start! There was a smooth transition into the summer. Steph Grenko (staff 2001-2007) re-joined the John Island staff team, this time as the Assistant Director. Steph was instrumental in working closely with our senior staff in developing our staff, program and most importantly- our kids. I would like to thank Steph, along with the entire John Island Staff team for another great summer.

The Spring and Summer of 2010 was enjoyable, exciting and warm. As we set our sights on 2011, we will always look back on 2010 with a sense of accomplishment and possibly a slight tan. Throughout the year, check out our new Facebook page for Alumni, Staff and Parent/Camper updates: www.facebook.com/johnisland Thanks to everyone in the John Island community for making this another successful year.

THE REST OF OUR LIVES

ALAS, "THE "BAG OF MILK" WAS A PRETTY GULL.....

It wouldn't be much of a stretch to say that the defining moment of our sailing trip to the Benjamin Islands in August 1983 was when Penny mistook a gull for a bag of milk... floating in the middle of the North Channel. You see, we were at the magical age Liesl sings about in the Sound of Music - 16 going on 17 - and we were on the verge of the rest of our lives.

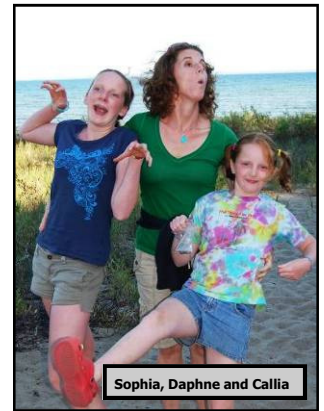
Yep, we were all inclined to see the world the way we wanted, to dive into adventures and face challenges head-on and at full throttle. It felt like we could do *anything* that summer. We were Penny, Lisa, Joanne, Sue, Amy, Kathy & Daphne, a close group of seven girls who'd come through our camper years and a CIT year together. We were "the JCs," or Junior Counselors - nowadays, you'd call us Norquays. As JCs that summer, we were immersed in skills development, leadership training and hands-on counseling for about six weeks, starting off at the Ontario Camp Leadership Centre at Bark Lake in June and ending up somewhere near the Benjamin Islands at the beginning of August.

For those of you who have never seen the Benjamin Islands, they are tiny gems dropped in the middle of the North Channel of Georgian Bay, forming part of that chain of rocky islands dotting the waters north of Manitoulin from John Island southeast to Killarney. The smooth pink granite so common and yet so unique to that area slopes gently to the crystalline waters in some places and drops sharply in others. These are the windswept white pines painted by the likes of Tom Thomson. The Benjis entice many boaters - kayakers, canoeists and sailors alike -- to their shores each summer.

And so it was that the JCs and their fearless leader Jeff Scott planned an outtrip to the Benjamin Islands using the camp's Laser II sailboats. This was outtripping by a mode of transportation not yet used by the camp to that point. We were gonna show 'em.

Day one dawned grey, gloomy and threatening rain. No matter, we were determined to set out. As best as I can remember, we were supposed to get further than Aird Island by the first night. It's next door to John Island, after all. But that threat of rain became a promise fulfilled and we got completely soaked in a thunderstorm before washing ourselves up on Aird's shores near the Wilkinson's camp, where they kindly put us up in their bunkie for the night. Not exactly what we had in mind but part of the adventure. Day two was glorious. The sun shone brilliantly and a westerly wind blew so hard, it sent us sailing down towards the Benjamins with bravado. It was such a great wind, we decided to do some trapezing. For the uninitiated among you, this means attaching oneself by harness to the mast and filling the spinnaker sail with that great wind so that the boat is slicing through the water on a 45 degree angle; the person in harness leads the way, standing upright near the bow of the boat. This all works quite well in theory, but one of the things that can go wrong includes a sudden change in the orientation of the boat, such as when your good friend lets go of the main sheet, that important rope that's keeping the sail full of awe-inspiring wind. I'm not going to name names, but when Kathy dropped the mainsheet while I was out front on the bow screamin' along, that sailboat's speeding journey through the cool waters of the channel ended abruptly. As the mainsheet slackened, the sails luffed, the boat stopped nearly dead, and pitched to right. As the boat started to turtle, I sailed across the bow and sliced open my thigh on the forestay bolt. Amy says

by Daphne Loukidelis



Sophia, Daphne and Callia



Kathy's sunrise photo from the Benjamins

she can still remember looking at the gash in my thigh in horror and watching while her white "Where in Health Are You?" t-shirt spiraled down into the black depths of the lake. I remembered how to tread water and so I did. But Jeff and his go-getter JCs were faced with a dilemma: get me to Elliot Lake to have the gash stitched and abandon the trip before we even made it to the Benjamins or settle for mid-channel first aid and a bigger scar. Since I wasn't exactly bleeding to death there on the lake, there was no real question in my mind that we were going to keep on keepin' on. What's a scar among friends and a story to tell about one that will forever hold her in my power?

We reached South Benjamin Island a few hours later and set up camp, our tents on a dramatic slant on the rock. That night as the sun set, we gathered around a campfire to sing songs. From others on the island, we received a gift of largesse, the last two glasses of wine that could be squeezed out of a box of Andres wine. Fine wine, it was not, and it was shared amongst the eight of us. But we were grateful for each other's company at the end of this fine summer, and I admit I may have been grateful for the light anaesthesia. After the late night around the campfire, a beautiful sunrise roused us from our sleep. It was one of those sunrises I'll remember forever, thanks to the photo Kathy took, which appears alongside this article. We packed up our tents and gear, and we set off back to John Island. The long sail back under a hot August sun, combined with grogginess from the late night before, was punctuated by a yell from Penny. "Look over there! It's a bag of milk. Can you scoop it up?" Following behind Penny's sailboat, Amy, Kathy and I strained to see the alleged bag of milk and, upon spotting the white floater, aimed our craft milkward. Alas, the "bag of milk" was a pretty gull who, offended to be mistaken for floating dairy goodness, took wing and flew away. Several hours later, we sat down to enjoy a glass of that good old John Island powdered milk, undaunted. Challenges, victories, successes and disappointments lay before us. But we'd just shared a fantastic summer full of them and knew we had each other and our experiences at John Island to lean on in the years ahead. Two of those Lasers are still around, 27 years later. They sit on main beach, waiting for someone to take them out. Next year at Family Camp, maybe Kathy will come out with me and hold the main sheet – firmly this time – while I get back up there for

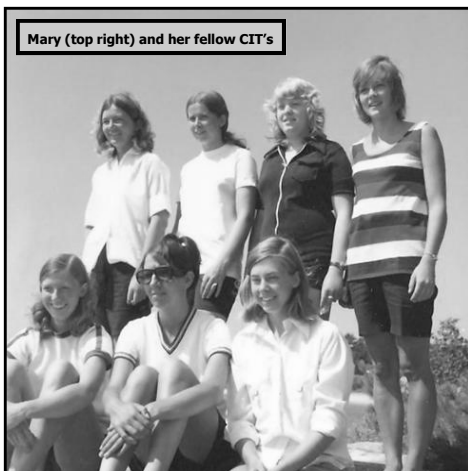
CANOEING AT JOHN ISLAND - 1970

THERE WERE NO THERMARESTS - YOU SLEPT ON THE GROUND..... By: Mary Mather Waddell (Camper to Director 1963-1979)

Once upon a time in the olde days, at John Island there were canoe trips! But nowhere near the same as in the 21st century. Equipment was limited and honestly archaic when compared to today. Sleeping bags were large affairs made of cotton and tons of stuffing. There were no thermarests - you slept on the ground and, heaven forbid, you did cut pine boughs to sleep on! Campers were clothed in COTTON – blue jeans were de rigeur and for warmth wool checked lumberjack jacket. Ponchos let the rain in whenever you lifted your paddle out of the water. To waterproof one's sleeping bag involved hours of practice doing a "proper bedroll" with a rubber groundsheet - no dry bags in those days The final test was to heave it in the lake and jump on it for 10 minutes with the campcraft director gleefully unfolding it to look for that fatal drop of water that meant you were going to be working on that educational effort the next day in camp craft.



Tents were canvas with no mosquito netting or a floor for that matter. Lifejackets were the "horse-collar" type that no serious paddler ever wore. John Island red canoes were 16' chestnut cedar strip canoes. Although not as practical as today's Kevlar and ABS canoes they are the one item that has history and quality that one can fondly reminisce about. Routes were limited to the rather immediate area around camp – to Killarney, Elliot Lake, Spanish – definitely not James Bay – why, no one had been up there since Henry Hudson ! In the olde days at JIC there was boy's camp and girl's camp. Coed is the new wave of camping. (Mind you it sure was fun I am sure to be the maintenance man at girls camp where 99% of the clientele was in love with you.) The most outrageous flashback was that no girls canoe trip could go out with a MALE trip leader . Not – a qualified male leader – just a male leader. Oh how it rankled our fledging feminist little hearts!!



Mary (top right) and her fellow CIT's

Regardless – there are many fond memories of trips at John Island. Girls CIT trip down the Spanish River where Barb Folgietti brought home a little kitten. Staff training camp trip where we camped on HWY 17 at the Serpent River and served coffee to the grader operator – Gary Mitchell.

A phone call from Boris (Bill Grace) after he and Judy Waddell's cabin had been paddling down the Whalesback with a fierce tailwind that swamped one canoe and caused the others to scatter among islands and yachts. They managed to get back together the next day but Boris requested a pair of jeans when the boat met them at Walkhouse- he had dropped his jeans as he ditched his boat to stay with a swamped canoe. Paddling to Camp Point (which was renamed "Mary's Cove"), the Dive, 3rd beach... And not so fond was, Heather Smith who burned her lips so bad she had to tape them shut. John Island produced many canoe trippers who still haunt the north woods to-day.

LEAF RAPIDS TO THE BAY

WHERE MY FUTURE WIFE TRIED HER BEST TO MAKE ME SWIM.....

By: Colin Veevers (Staff & Director 1993 - 2006)

The summer started with a bang – literally. It was the late spring of 1999 and Tammy Prodan, Tracy Smith, Stephen Baird and I were headed to Hartley Bay for a crash course in polar bear defense and an opportunity to polish up our shooting skills. Not the usual start to a YMCA John Island summer, I remember thinking to myself as I hoisted the barrel of our Remington 870 12-gauge to my shoulder and unloaded five shots in quick succession. We were preparing to embark on a rather remarkable trip. The four of us would be leading the two Norquay Trips (second year leadership development out-trips) down Manitoba's legendary Seal River. The Seal, one of Manitoba's Northern rivers, is known as being one of the last undammed rivers in the area, a place where wolves, harbour seals, belugas, caribou and polar bears still roam. The polar bears were our reason for the shotguns and unusual pre-trip training. I am sure if you ask her, Tammy still remembers the massive bruise the guns pounded into her shoulder. It was shaping up to be quite the trip.



Fast-forward a few days and our group was just arriving at camp. We had little time to pack the remaining food and equipment and hit the road for the two and a half day drive to beautiful Leaf Rapids (our put-in for the Seal River trip). The eager participants for the trip were Steve Desotti, Pam Grace, Corbett and Conor Hancey, Julie Lowry, Heather Miller, Marie-Soleil Roche, Gregory Rubin, Louise Scott, and Sam Tobin. We were couldn't wait for the adventure to begin. All the months of careful planning and preparation were about to be put to the test.

Our first whitewater experience of the trip came fairly early on as we were able to play around in the relatively small and calm Leaf Rapids. This allowed us to work out our "car legs" and polish up on some of the skills such as S-turns, O-turns, and ferries that we would need on our trip down the river. It also allowed us to get a first taste of some moving water – a memory that we would cherish and help propel us through South Indian Lake (a 160 km long and at times 40 km wide lake) which would be our home for the next 6 days.

Throughout our travels on South Indian Lake the group quickly fell into a daily rhythm of paddling, meal preparation, and leadership lessons. One of the focuses of the trip was leadership development and we tried to incorporate this learning into the trip through a series of leadership lessons and leader of the day opportunities designed to provide the participants with an opportunity to develop their navigation, group management, and decision making skills. Tammy and I lucked out, not only the weather (it averaged around 30 degrees, sunny, and dead calm) but also with the natural leadership skills of our group, as everyone proved that they could successfully lead the rest of us during these first days.

After the long days of paddling on South Indian Lake, everyone was ready for the change in pace that the Little Sand River brought to our trip. This challenging creek would provide us with navigational obstacles in the form of twisting passageways, downed trees, a counter-current, and bugs that could test even the hardiest of repellents. The pocket chainsaw that we had stashed in our gear prior to departure definitely proved their worth as the group cut, poled, and dragged our way up the Little Sand. This section of the river also provided us with our only two portages of the trip and as we exited the Sand River we were now in the Arctic watershed and well on our way to Hudson's Bay.

The next section of the trip was an increasingly fast flowing river as we left the large lakes and entered into the south channel of the Seal River. One notable memory came on day 15 when as we entered the Porcupine Rapids. Connor and Corbett, who were paddling in the lead, swamped their boat in a series of large standing waves. The twins made it to a rock and their boat stuck in the middle of the river, its painter lodged deep in the rocks. After ensuring everyone was safe, we turned our attention to the stuck boat. The easiest method of freeing the boat was to simply cut the rope, so I asked the twins if anything important was tied to the other end and they said "No, nothing they could think of", so the rope was cut, and boat freed. We camped just down stream to dry our gear. Later, that evening one of twins came over to Tammy and I to tell us that the water filter everyone was searching for was most probably attached to the rope I had cut and was now stuck at the bottom of the rapid. The next morning Tammy and I mounted a rescue effort and with a little luck (some great swimming on Tammy's part) freed the water filter and saved our group from drinking iodine for the next 15 days.

We spent a well-deserved rest day in Tadoule Lake, a Dene First Nation community and the only settlement we would see on our trip. It was remarkable to meet the people who lived in this remote place and to hear their stories.¹ Once back on the river, we were faced with increasingly difficult rapids and some of the most amazing scenery I have ever seen. It was not uncommon to paddle beside 100 foot eskers which provided us with excellent places to hike and explore when we were not busy paddling downstream. One particular rapid that sticks out in my mind is "The Gorge", where my future wife tried

her best to make me swim. This rapid was a large series of standing waves, which we scouted extensively before selecting a route through the smallest of the waves. Pam Grace and I were in the lead boat and about to enter the rapid when Tammy, seeing a river feature she thought we had not previously seen, sent us a signal to travel into the larger waves in the center of the rapid, and away from danger. This sent Pam and I on a roller coaster of a ride, which we managed to navigate without flipping but definitely left us thinking that the remainder of the group should follow the original plan.

The latter portion of the Seal River also showed us its natural beauty as we saw seals almost daily, polar bears (including a mother and a cub which we quickly paddled by), a lone caribou, and belugas. The group gelled well together and everyone became comfortable leading us toward our goal of reaching the Bay. We had just a few challenges left ahead of us including the big "Deaf Rapids", named not for the lack of noise but rather the deafening sounds of its large waves and holes. We lined the side of this rapid and finally dipped our paddles into the salt water of the Arctic Ocean. All I could think was "Wow, we made it!" The next few days saw us fly back to Churchill in a Beaver, train to Winnipeg on the Muskeg express, and drive to John Island. We returned to a noisy camp filled with excitement. It was good to be back, yet my fondest memories of that trip are of the 12 of us working together to achieve our goals - oh and of "The Educator" but that's a story for another time...

1. Author's Note – The Dene of Tadoule Lake were part of the misguided Canadian Government Relocation strategy of the 1960's and their struggle and tribulations are chronicled in the book "Night Spirits" by Ila Bussidor and Usun Bilgen-Reinart.

JOHN ISLAND LUMBER MILL MEMORIES COME ALIVE!

MY FATHER AND I WERE THE ONLY ONES NOT AFFECTED BY POISON IVY.....



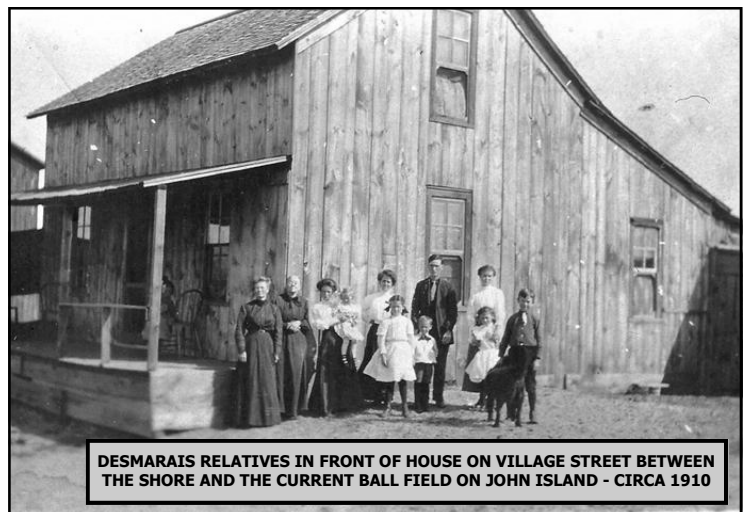
Over the years the camp has done many things to try to preserve the history involved in the island's past – especially the lumber mill days from 1885 to 1917. Most recently we have been communicating with Nancy Desmarais in Vancouver whose family has a long and deep history with John Island during the mill days. The picture of her ancestors standing by the house shows Nancy's relatives as confirmed by her aunt, Adele Beckerton, age 93, who lives in Spanish. Here is what Nancy has added: "I would like to sincerely thank my Aunt Adele Beckerton who was is 93 years old , alert enough to identify the people in the photographs, my cousins Frances Davies MacDonald, Rodney Beckerton, and Rose Mary Peddie for facilitating the sharing of the information and historical documents that we have today. They have been able to trace my grandmother Blanche H. Desmarais' (nee Cote) family back 14 generations..

"As for John Island, yes, I've been there many times in my youth as I was born in Elliot Lake. My grandparents moved from John Island to Spanish, Ontario after the mill burned down and many of them still remain there. So the North Shore was and will always be my home, although I currently live in Vancouver, BC. I did some sailing in the area as well. It is beautiful and I intend to return there in the next year or so.

"I recall one humorous story. My father took me for a tour of the YMCA camp there when I was approximately 8 years old. I recall one group of boys were trekking through the trails and went off trail attempting to take a short cut onto a small path. We were lead right through a patch of poison ivy. The boys were covered in spots and they had shoes and knee socks on. I was in shorts and bare feet. And my father and I were the only ones not affected by the poison ivy."

The following is the list of people in the photograph as related to Nancy Desmarais:

- Great Grandma Adele Eugenie Blanchet Cote
- Great-Great Grandmother Eugenie Blanchet
- Great Aunt Lea Cote Lalonde holding her younger daughter Nettie
- Next to her is Great Aunt Anna Cote who married Jed Beauchamp
- In front of Great Aunt Anna is Great Aunt Regina Cote (never married)
- Great Uncle John Lalonde
- His son Uncle Edward (Eddie) Lalonde
- Grandmother Blanche Hortense Cote (my grandmother, in this photo, not yet married to my Grandfather, James Joseph Desmarais)
- Great Aunt Anne Lalonde
- Great Uncle Wilfrid "Pit" Cote



JOHN ISLAND CAMP WILDERNESS CAMPING - CIRCA 1960

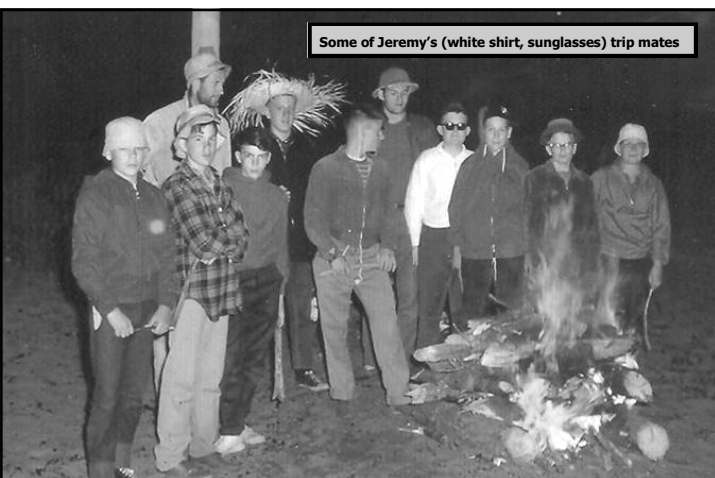
A LARGE BAG OF PRUNES WAS PLACED IN THE BOW OF EVERY CANOE.....

By: Rev. Jeremy Mahood

The Kismet supply boat stopped about 500 feet from the sandy beach that would become our wilderness home for the next month. One by one the canoes, which had been tied behind the boat, were brought near, loaded with food, axes, pots pans, matches, clothes, sleeping bags, personal items and the all essential TP (toilet paper). With great excitement and a bit of anxiety the 18 campers, guided by our leader Mr. Koski, made our way toward the shore line of Aitken Island.

We beached the canoes and together placed our feet on the sandy shore that would be our home for the next month. It was here that we would build all the necessities of home; sleeping shelters, a safe food storage area, build kitchens, fire pits, and a loo to go with the TP. Our training regimen began the next morning. The trip of a lifetime was only three weeks away and we had to be in shape for the arduous task following the ancient voyageur canoe route from the Spanish River, along the North Shore, down the St Mary's River to Sault Ste. Marie. Every day we practiced righting overturned canoes by canoe over canoe rescues, solo paddling, swimming, strength training, water proofing sleeping bags, practiced first aid and developed menus and food lists for the week long adventure.

The day of our departure arrived and we began packing the all important food. We packed the last meal of the last day first and successively backward from there to lunch on day one. A large bag of prunes was placed in the bow of every canoe for daily sustenance. Before long we were heading up the Whalesback, past John Harbour and on our way to the unpredictable waters of the North Channel. We were just outside Iron Bridge when we encountered our first disaster. We had been surfing down the front side of four foot waves when the rogue wave struck. Looking over my shoulder from the bow seat all I could see was a wall of water picking up the stern of the canoe. Within seconds the canoe was doing a cartwheel. Seconds later we were capsized and swimming as hard as we could in the turbulent waters. The canoe survived, we survived, and I still had my glasses on. Later that evening we would discover that our water proofing techniques were proven adequate as we would sleep in dry sleeping bags under the shelter of our overturned canoe. The remaining two days were uneventful. Paddling for six to seven hours each day, we often took breaks by lashing two canoes together and hoisting a small piece of canvas as a makeshift sail, allowing the strong winds of the North Channel to guide us toward our daily evening camp site. By day five we had finally reached the mouth of the St. Marys River. Within a few hours the second



disaster would strike. The current in the river was running about 3-4 miles per hour and our average paddling speed 4-5 miles per hour. The trip up the river should have taken an hour or so, but it was going to take us a whole day. Ever so slowly we progressed from marker buoy to marker buoy resting at each one and hanging on for dear life so our forward progress would not be impeded.

We were making our way along just inside the shipping channel markers when a very large Bethlehem Steel freighter came up behind us. Looking up toward the forward deck we could see a deck hand mimicking our paddling action, while other deck hands cheered us on. Suddenly the water around our canoe began to churn violently and the canoe began to be pulled backward toward the stern of the freighter. We could hear the low rumble of the giant propeller, slowly we were being sucked into its wake...at 15 years of age I thought were

about to die. We paddled with all our strength, but to no avail. We were being drawn into a whirlpool created by the prop wash and the wall of water being displaced by the sheer volume of the ship. Death was imminent. Suddenly we found ourselves being shot away from the ship toward the shore. Like a rocket our canoe flew forward through the water and beached itself on the exposed shore line. We had survived, we were intact, the canoe was intact, and we had escaped. Nervous laughter soon turned again to horror as we watched a three foot wall of water racing toward the shore, smash into our canoe and once again throw us into the water. The ship was pushing a mighty wall of water out of its way as it traversed the narrows of the river and as the stern passed our location that same wall of water returned with a vengeance.

We arrived in the Sault near suppertime, exhausted, tired and excited that we had completed the ancient route taken by the voyageurs and would go down in Canadian history. There to greet us was the John Island truck, the canoe rack on the back and enough money for a nice restaurant cooked meal. We had completed our assigned task, delivered all the campers and red canoes intact and on time. Our summer adventure had come to an end but the memories would last a lifetime.

The Rev. Dr. Jeremy Mahood was a camper and then a staff member at John Island Camp and Camp Y Land in the later 1960's. He is the Pastor of All Nations Church in Sudbury, ON. He can be contacted at jmahood@allnationschurch.ca

JOHN ISLAND ALUMNI

HOW TO GET INVOLVED.....

It may have been close to 5 years since you were last involved as a staff member at John Island Camp. . . or, perhaps 10, 25 or even 50 years. But, more and more alumni have been coming back in many capacities to ensure the quality of the camp keeps on improving while enjoying the camp themselves. Here are a few ways that YOU can get involved.....

The Annual Spring Work Party: Here is an opportunity to grab your sleeping bag and work clothes and come out to the camp to help with some projects and get the camp ready for the next camping season. In 2011, the work weekend will be May 6-8. Activities usually include painting, construction projects, cleaning, etc. Bring the family and enjoy the camp while working – there will be jobs for all ages. Contact Camp Director Pete Kerigan at pete.kerigan@sudbury.ymca.ca for more information on how to get involved.

Write for the Alumni Newsletter. We are always looking for interesting and historical articles and other information for the Newsletter. For more information or to contribute a personal update or article, contact Gary Gray at gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca

Bring your family to Family Camp during the end of August and share the camp that has been so special to you with the rest of your family. A number of camp alumni join us for Family Camp each year and enjoy the facilities and the opportunity to renew old friendships.....and make new friends!

Contribute to the John Island Capital Campaign. The campaign goal of \$895,000 is getting closer as we have now surpassed the \$800,000 mark in contributions. The newsletters have been explaining how the camp has been renewed for the campers of the present and the future, but there is still a bit more to go. To help out with the campaign, contact Gary Gray at gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca

Sponsor a Camper. John Island has a rich and respected history of not turning away campers because of a genuine inability to pay the fees. The John Island Camping experience is one that all youth can benefit from and by helping sponsor a camper, you can assist many more youth have that experience.

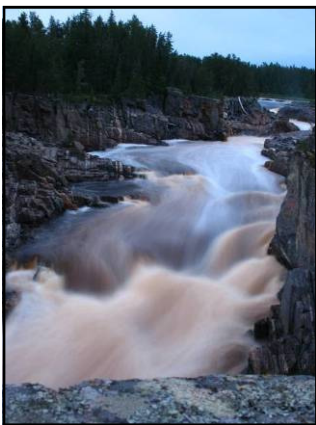
Be a John Island Ambassador. Nothing is as valuable to the promotion of a camp as word of mouth. As someone who understands the unsurpassed value of the camp experience at John Island, you can help tell your family, your friends and co-workers of the great camp John Island really is. We can make camp brochures, CD's, and other interpretive materials available to you if you would like.

Visit the camp. We are proud of the improvements to John Island and we would like our alumni to be as proud of the camp today as we are. Come and see what we are doing. To make arrangements for a visit, contact Camp Director Pete Kerigan at pete.kerigan@sudbury.ymca.ca

2010 NORQUAY RIVER TRIPS

THESE VALUES WERE INSTILLED OVER THE COURSE OF THE TRIP BY THE LEADERS... By: Chris Jackson (Staff Member 2000 - 2010)

The 2010 John Island Camps leadership programs - the River Norquays travelled down the Missinaibi and Moose rivers. The two trips departed July 8th & 10th and returned August 12th & 14th including travel time to/from John Island Camp. The route covered was a historic trade route with a smaller river/lake loop attached. The trips started in Dog Lake (about a 2hr drive from Wawa), continued through a series of lakes to Big Missinaibi Lake, looped through Little Missinaibi River & Lake and then moved onto The Missinaibi River which merges into The Moose River, finishing in Moosonee. In short the trips encompassed the shortest distance between Lake Superior and James Bay excluding about 100km along the Michipicoten River. The total distance travelled was about 630km by canoe and 11km portaging. Each trip had one male and one female leader to guide a group of 8 or 10 participants. 775g of food was brought for each person for every day on the river, 2/3's of which left with the group at the start, and the rest was picked up at the halfway point in Mattice, ON. No set meal plan was established for the trips; instead the participants were



encouraged to create their own meals and learn to ration food accordingly. This led to the participants cooking anything from black bean & salsa soup to oatmeal hotcakes. Highlights of the trip were numerous and various. They included: paddling down a set of rapids for the first time, portaging a canoe that weighs ¾ your body weight, meeting Fred Neegan (a man who has lived in the area for over 50 years), attending a prom or tea party, or simply marvelling at the natural beauty of Thunderhouse Falls - picture on left.

The impact of the trip, as with any YMCA program is priceless in terms of the lessons learned, hardships overcome, friendships built and the many discoveries of personal insight. A sense of adventure is also acquired during the course of the trip as the participants embrace the unknown of the wilderness and experience it face to face. For instance: being part of the 1,370,000L of water flowing through the Moose River every second, dropping out of the Canadian Shield into the James Bay Lowlands through Hell's Gate Canyon and paddling next to a 700lb bearded seal. Underneath all of these highlights, impacts and experiences are the core values of John Island Camp: Excellence, Caring, Respect, Responsibility and Honesty. These values are instilled over

the course of the trip by the leaders in the forms of facilitated activities, cabin circles or simply hanging out in a canoe and talking for 8 hours. The participants in turn pass on these values when they are on the staff team in subsequent years. It is this transition of beliefs, values, camping practices and quite often a sense of humour that has made the River Norquay program what it is now, and will continue to define it for years to come.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

NEWS, UPDATES, AND HAPPENINGS IN THE LIVES OF JOHN ISLAND ALUMNI.....

Tom Fenske ventured into the world of politics in his hometown of Sudbury this year and ran for the position of City Councillor). Despite running against a former mayor of Lively, a former councillor in the same riding, and other candidates, Tom made it a real battle and did the best of all the youthful candidates in the entire city, coming a close second. Congratulations Tom! Tom is married to Jennifer and together they have a daughter, Madeline.

Lauren Olding (Andersen) and her sister **Danika Andersen** are paddling a canoe in the Yukon River Quest next year. Also considering entering the competition are **Brian O'Neill** and **Sean Lougheed**. Brian reports that he along with **Ryan "Turbo" Forsythe, Alexie Merk and Matthew Perpick** paddled the Seal River this past summer. All these John Island Alumni did much of their first canoeing at John Island.

Colin and Tammy Veevers (children Madison and Bradley), Becky and Brent Coulas (daughter Clara), Lisa Gainer (son Matthew), Martha Gonya (son Amadou), Carissa Hart (son Liam), Amr Abdelhady (son Hady) and Sarah Bennetto (son Rory), are all John Island Alumni who have recently brought future John Island campers into their families.

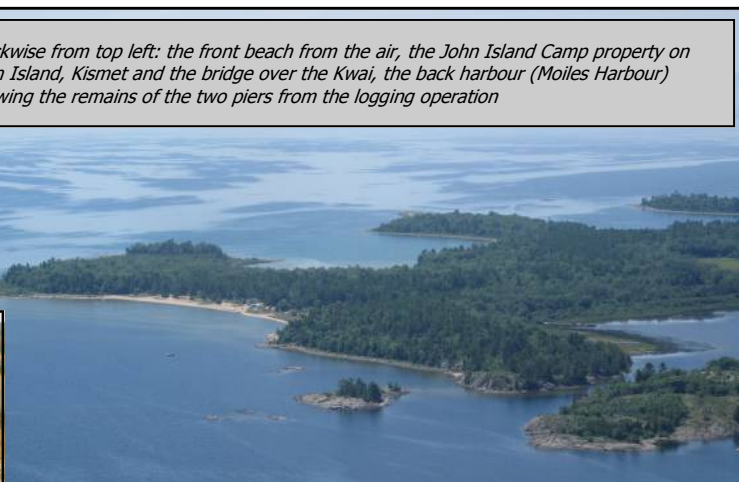
Dan Waddell and Esther Simmonds-McAdam recently got married in Creemore after originally meeting on the John Island Seal River Norquay Trip in 1999. In her journal of the trip, Esther wrote, "How can I possibly condense a month and a half of rainy days, boating with whales and polar bears, extreme cold, aching bodies, breath-taking skies, food a la sand, paddling songs and life-long relationships into a story anyone would believe. I'm not sure I believe it myself."

We Want to Hear from YOU!

With over 700 Alumni on our mailing list, there are several who would be interested in being brought up to date with the latest happenings in YOUR life. We don't pretend to be a FACEBOOK, but no one has more John Island Alumni readers than this newsletter. Send us an e-mail or a letter to let us know about you and your family, latest developments and accomplishments. Send your e-mails to: gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca and your letters to: Gary Gray, YMCA Sudbury, 140 Durham St., Sudbury, ON P3E 3H5



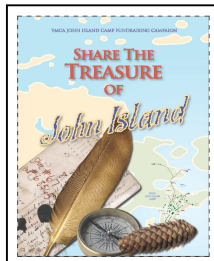
Clockwise from top left: the front beach from the air, the John Island Camp property on John Island, Kismet and the bridge over the Kwai, the back harbour (Moiles Harbour) showing the remains of the two piers from the logging operation



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



For information on the John Island building renewal campaign go to:
<http://www.johnisland.ymca.ca/images//zbuilding%20progress%20-%20fall%202010%20for%20website.pdf>
To donate to the John Island renewal campaign - contact Gary Gray at gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca