

# OCONTO ECHO

WINTER 2010

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dear Alumnae,

Another wonderful summer spent on Eagle Lake has come and gone! In 2010 we enjoyed a perfect balance of heat waves and spectacular rest hour storms – yep, timed for rest hour! This was a welcome change from some of the more water soaked summers we've seen in the past few years. Spirits were high amongst campers and staff and special programs like QC All Camp, Banquet, Native Gathering and several all-camp games went very well. The competitive fun spirit of getting a clue to get the cake first that you would get anyway is alive and well! It is so nice that at Oconto, we are still so enthusiastic for the little things, the satisfaction of doing it for no reward except fun! We also hosted our first two sessions of the brand new Pre-Tads program. Girls aged 4 to 7 stayed for just two nights and three days, giving them a taste of the camp life without enough extra time to get too lonesome for Mom and Dad! They had a wonderful time and our staff really enjoyed working with this new age group. Stay tuned for pictures to be posted to [www.campoconto.com](http://www.campoconto.com)!

Bruce and I were able to spend our first fall at camp together in 23 years as our son Mark has just started at Queen's University this past September and Bronwyn is living in Toronto. We were able to complete many jobs we have not had time for in the past and hosted many groups at Oconto, including Queens University Health and Kinesiology, the residents of the Family Medicine Program, Lorne Park Secondary School, and Turnbull Learning Centre. We are trying to expand our Spring and Fall business. Any ideas for us?



One of our June Pre Tads, known as Chickadees, showing off her new shirt!



Bruce and staff member Calynn Irwin partaking in friendly competition at Native Gathering



Main Dock on a sunny Fall afternoon



Two staff visiting camp to check out what is in store for next year's work camp staff!



Dining Hall dance parties were a summer 2010 favourite!



The Tuck Shop is still the most popular place in camp!

It was a beautiful close to the summer, but we both agreed we prefer camp when it is alive with the energy of a couple hundred happy campers. Luckily, as winter rushes in we are coming closer and closer to our 87<sup>th</sup> summer in 2011!

Registration is open and several girls have already signed up, some for eight weeks! I am looking forward to scheduling information sessions in a few cities across Ontario in the new year and continuing the tradition of hosting staff dinners in each of those cities. If you know any families interested in learning more about Oconto, please ask them to check out the website for information session dates or to contact the Oconto office. I am happy to go to people's homes to tell them about Oconto! We are working on some exciting developments in our ongoing goal to make camp more environmentally friendly. We have been rallying in the Sharbot Lake community to improve composting and recycling programs enough that they can handle our output and have been soliciting ideas from our staff on ways to minimize daily waste across camp. Most recently, we have had several engineers up to camp to survey the land for installation of solar energy panels, allowing our property to become an energy bank and power all cabins, lodges, bathrooms and shower houses with solar power! This a huge and worth while endeavour, which will hopefully be implemented as soon as summer 2012.

We are already looking forward to next summer and I am so glad that we can share that excitement with you. I wish you a happy and healthy holiday season and look forward to continuing to keep in touch with Oconto Alumnae, old and new!

Best Wishes,

Lisa Wilson

## THE OCONTO CAMBERSHIP FUND

The Oconto Campership Fund was created to help girls that have previously attended Oconto and are for whatever reason, be it family illness, job loss or divorce, no longer able to afford the cost of camp. Each year, funds collected from alumnae go to subsidize two or three campers to return to camp. As we all know, Oconto can become a cornerstone of a young person's life, and to take Oconto away at such a tumultuous and difficult time could be devastating to the individual. The campership fund exists to avoid that situation and it is your contributions that make it possible. We appreciate your support and hope that you will think of the Oconto Campership Fund when making decisions about giving for 2011.



The board of directors responsible for managing the fund have recently come up with a new tagline. They will now advertise as "The Oconto Campership Fund – Keeping Dreams Alive!" I think it is quite fitting for all the great work the fund does!

## Who does the Oconto Campership Fund help?

We make sure that the financial help provided by the fund is coupled with complete anonymity, but I thought you might like to hear a bit about one of the girls that it has sponsored for the past few summers.

She is full of what can only be classified as Oconto spirit. She's energetic, enthusiastic, motivated and very inclusive. She gets along well with the girls she has moved throughout sections with and works hard to earn levels at activities. Her favourite activity is riding, and she certainly does excel at it! She attends camp for one month at a time, and it is obvious that she soaks up every minute and takes every opportunity for fun that she can. Her time at Oconto is obviously a time for her to break free from the stresses of city life, and she takes full advantage of it! Her smile is brightest at camp!

With your help we can continue to send more and more girls like this camper back to Oconto summer after summer!



## How to Donate

To make a donation, simply write a cheque to The Oconto Campership Fund and mail it to Cliff Labbett at

610 Bullock Street, suite 414  
Unionville, Ontario  
L3R 0G1

We are currently working on adding an Oconto Campership Fund page to the Oconto website, developing a tool for donating online and creating a planned giving document. Please check the Oconto website for information on these new features.



## NEW AND EXCITING!

Camp has recently plunged into the 21<sup>st</sup> century at full force. We are happy to announce that we are maintaining both a Camp Oconto Facebook page as well as a Twitter account! Social media has become a powerful tool in the past few years. More and more society (and most specifically our kids) are turning to websites like twitter and Facebook as venues by which to express themselves and to learn about the next big thing. Of course, the internet can be a dangerous place and it is important for us to monitor their activities and to educate them about appropriate behaviour when using these sites. Camp has recently created both pages that have been advertised to campers and staff as a means to be updated on all things Oconto and to be exposed to controlled, informative, and meaningful internet content. The general Facebook page acts as sister to the already existing “Official Camp Oconto Alumnae Group” that was created with the idea of reconnection and alumni updates in mind! Please be advised that there are several groups, events, and pages using Oconto’s name that are not monitored by us and have been created by third parties. The official Oconto page, with the official Oconto crest as the main picture, as well as the group called “The Official Oconto Alumnae Group” are the only two Facebook sites that are directly connected to our office.

We created these two accounts so that kids can be exposed to a positive influence on the internet, and reminded of the values we try to instil in them throughout the summer. If nothing more, they are at least a wonderful way for the girls to reconnect and keep in touch with their summer time friends. The same goes for alumni! We hope that you’ll support us on this new adventure, and perhaps even look us up if you happen to use Facebook or twitter yourselves! To take a look at the sites, search “Camp Oconto” on your Facebook account and look for the official camp logo. The alumni group can be found under the name “The Official Camp Oconto Alumnae Group” and our twitter address is [www.twitter.com/campoconto](http://www.twitter.com/campoconto). Both sites were created and are being maintained by our Assistant Director, Nora Hammond.

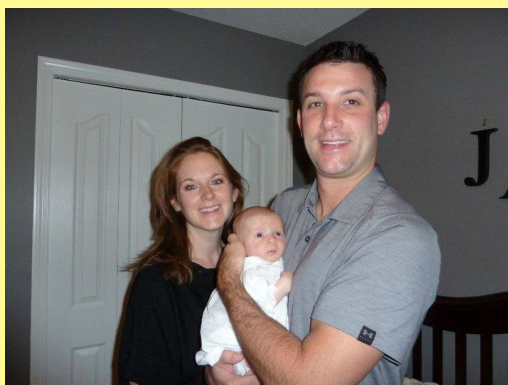
## KEEPING IN TOUCH

**Mel Hamilton Porter** welcomed her second son, Sam Scott Porter on November 12, 2010. He was born at home at 8 pounds, 15 ounces and is as cute as his older brother, Bruce!

**Signe Scammell (Macdonald)** and her husband Brian welcomed their first child on August 11, 2010. Meet the very handsome Jack Jason Scammell!



Jack Jason Scammell, born August 11, 2010



Signe, Jack and Brian



Jack has an Oconto paddle in his nursery!



Mel and Sam Scott Porter

## CLOSING THOUGHTS

- . A computer forward...
- . I received this and thought it could be easily applied to camp friends...
- . A young wife sat on a sofa on a hot humid day, drinking iced tea and visiting with her mother. As they talked about life, about marriage, about the responsibilities and obligations of adulthood, the mother clinked the ice cubes in her glass thoughtfully and turned a clear, sober glance upon her daughter.
- . “Don’t forget your sisters,” she advised, swirling the tea leaves to the bottom of her glass. “They’ll be more important as you get older. No matter how much you love your husband, no matter how much you love the children you may someday have, you are still going to need sisters. Remember to go places with them now and then, do things with them. Remember that ‘sisters’ means every woman in your life: your girlfriends, your daughters, all of your female relatives. You’ll need the other women. Women always do.”
- . “What a funny piece of advice,” the young woman thought. “I’m now a married woman, for goodness sake! A grown up! Surely my husband and the family we may start will be all I need to make my life worthwhile!”

But she listened to her mother. She kept in contact with her “sisters” and made more female friends each year. As the years tumbled by, she gradually came to understand that her mother really knew what she was talking about. As time and nature work their changes and their (cont’d)



mysteries upon a woman, sisters are the mainstays of her life.

Time passes. Life happens. Distance separates. Children grow up. Jobs come and go. Love waxes and wanes. Hearts break. But sisters are there, no matter how much time and how many miles are between you. A girlfriend is never farther away than needing her can reach.

So remember your Oconto "sisters". They need you as much as you need them!



**Have a wonderful holiday season!**