



CENTENNIAL BEAT

JANUARY 2012

CHILDREN'S CAMPS

Dear Readers,

This is the first issue of the Centennial Beat, a monthly addition to the Voice leading up to the start of our Club's Centennial Year on July 1, 2012. The Centennial Beat will highlight membership involvement over the past 100 years in projects and activities in our areas of service.

Rotary was founded as a business networking group but rapidly expanded to creating fellowship among members. This led to great activity and the motto "They profit most who serve best." Much of the information in the Centennial Beat will come from, "These Were The Days: The story of The Rotary Club of Toronto from 1912 to 1999"; for this book we thank members John MacDonald, John Austin, Frank Strickland, Don Armitage, John Talman and George Richardson, and past members Don Patterson, Blake Moore and Al Martin. Other sources will be the Club's Voice collection from 1918 and members' recollections.

Enjoy.

Maureen Bird

From the beginning

Children and youth services have been a major focus of members since the earliest days. Summer camp programs for disadvantaged children have enriched the lives of young people over the years, helping many find success in life. What a joy for a needy youngster to be taken from harsh city living conditions to spend days in the open country!

Bolton Camp: 1922 - 1940

Bolton Camp, also called Fresh Air Camp, was 40 km north-west of Toronto and was a partnership of our Club with Family Services Toronto. During the 1920s our Club donated to this camp \$150,000 – equivalent to two million dollars today! In 1922 many Club members pitched in with supplies, hammers and saws to construct some permanent buildings, needed to service the little tent "city" which housed the families who

camped there for 12 days to three weeks. Over 1,000 children came to camp in 1922, and even more had to be turned away. More building ensued in early 1923 so that an additional 900 mothers and children could attend. By 1927 it was decided that the tents should be replaced by cabins, and a swimming pool was added as well as a new central camp hall for girls. In 1931, Rotary Hall was provided for the enjoyment of campers. Financial support continued to the camp for many years. Sadly, Bolton Camp closed in 1999 as the buildings had passed their usefulness.



Blue Mountain Camp: 1937 - 2002

The formation of Easter Seals Ontario can be traced back to November 28, 1922, when representatives from 10 Rotary Clubs met in Windsor to discuss the inadequate resources and support available for the province's children with physical disabilities. Recognizing a need for action, they formed the Ontario Society for Crippled Children. Toronto Rotarian Gordon Leitch donated property in Collingwood in 1937 for the establishment of Blue Mountain Camp. What a generous gift! The camp opened that summer to children with polio and other crippling ailments. In 1942, 12 Club members arrived with hammers and brushes for a spring weekend of work and fellowship – an annual tradition that continues to this day. The contingent of Rotarian "campers" quickly grew to over 70 regular volunteers, with Rotarian chefs increasing from two to eight. Each year the chefs rose to new challenges. The culinary delights prepared by the team were worth ten times the cost of participation. It was always a gastronomic feast. The president had responsibility for the refreshment wagon which made regular trips around the grounds so no one was left flagging. The evenings were filled with food, comradeship, cards, guitars, fireside singsongs and much good cheer. Morning rounds started with the bell (how Rotarian!) and libations, followed by porridge, eggs, freshly baked bread and much more. We miss some of our special chefs like Herbie Heimbecker and John Spragge. For special Sunday services, we thank Elgin Coutts and Norm Simpson. The Rotary camp weekend welcomed its first women in 1990 and hosted a wedding in 1995! Sadly, after the 2002 season, the camp was closed.



"Why, oh why, I have been asking myself, didn't I get involved with this venture when I first joined the Club, instead of waiting 19 years to do so?" Rotarian Camper, 1983



CENTENNIAL BEAT



More recently

Camp Huronda: 2003 - 2006

Our painting skills were not to be left behind as the group moved on. Camp Huronda is a non-profit camp for children with diabetes, owned and operated by the Canadian Diabetes Association. It was established in 1971 and is located on a beautifully wooded peninsula on Lake Waseosa near Huntsville. With the start of a major renovation in 2007, our Rotarian campers moved on once again.

"The best part? Knowing the shouts, giggles, life experiences and friendships Lake Scugog Camp will mean to so many deserving children for years to come."

Rotarian Camper, 2011

Lake Scugog Camp: 2007 – the present

Lake Scugog Camp serves inner-city children and mothers, many from shelters. Some campers arrive with only the clothes on their backs. Set on a large acreage it was in desperate need of the tender loving care of our indomitable Rotarian campers who brought skills beyond painting to the task. The work has included resetting foundations, replacing doors and windows, building outhouses, roofing, fences, and stripping innards of buildings to bare walls. Never have Rotarians felt so welcomed as by the camp staff who participate alongside us. In August 2011 the propane stove caught fire, which precipitated the launching of a fund-raising campaign to replace the kitchen completely. What do we accomplish? Far more than painting some cabins and longer lasting than renewing old friendships or making new ones, we gain glimpses of Rotary in action, "Service Above Self," and the good feelings that go with knowing we are making a difference!



MOVING FORWARD

How will you get involved?
2012-2013

Sign Up

Lake Scugog Camp (LSC) Weekend

May 25-27, 2012

Contact: showson@mackiereasearch.com

Contribute to the

John Spragge LSC Kitchen Campaign

Contact: kandras@mackiereasearch.com

Rotarian Campers

- Use old skills and learn new ones!
 - Work hard and play hard!
- Bring an appetite for fellowship and culinary delights!

100⁴100

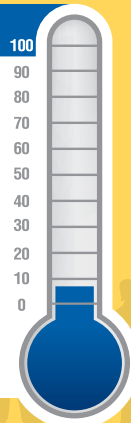
CENTENNIAL MEMBERSHIP GOAL

"I found that my first camp experience created lasting friendships that would never have happened simply by meeting people for lunch every Friday. Working, eating and singing together have created very special bonds. I'll never miss a camping opportunity – see you next year!"

A new Rotarian Camper

"My mission is to get the word out on how vitally important it is to get Rotarians to attend the camp. We agree it is a weekend to strengthen our pride as Rotarians"

Rotarian Camper



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