

South Tea Echo




THE VOICE OF CAMP TAMAKWA • ALGONQUIN PARK

THE BEST OF SUMMER 2023

The Tuff Beavers
Rise to the Occasion

The Beat Goes On
for The Band

This Just in,
from George Hirsch

Revisiting Tamakwa's
Founding Fathers





THE MAGIC OF CAMP

In praise of the timeless Tamakwa experience, for which wonderful, eye-opening journeys and special, longstanding friendships are such an important part of spending life-enhancing summers on the Sunny Shores. BY DIANE BALD AND MICHAEL BUDMAN

For generations, Camp Tamakwa has played a key role, directly or indirectly, in helping shape the lives of countless campers and staff. Although not always apparent at the time, friendships forged at camp often ultimately prove fortuitous, leading to positive, life-changing developments.

Such is certainly the case with Michael Budman and Don Green, who, in case you don't know, were the co-founders of Roots, the iconic Canadian brand that celebrated its 50th anniversary this past August. Both hailing from Detroit, they met at Tamakwa in Algonquin Park in their youth, having no idea where their friendship would take them. And what a wonderful journey through life it has been since then.

Like for so many others, Tamakwa holds a



very strong place in our hearts. It inspired almost everything we did at Roots through our lifestyle and experiences in the rugged north land.

Michael and I love to see the special bonds of friendship that take root at camp and last a lifetime. After seven summers as owners of Tamakwa, we're more convinced than ever that camp is the great-

est place for kids, where they can be who they are on their own terms in a safe environment, learn independence, respect, strive to achieve new skills and learn life lessons. All tremendously beneficial to Tamakwans, regardless of their age, as they move forward in their everyday lives. It's part of the magic of Tamakwa.

That was extremely ap-

parent this past summer, as it proved a great summer of achievements for so many campers. There's no mystery. It's largely attributed to the incredible hard work, passion and dedication of our terrific staff – counselors, specialists, head staff – and of course our senior leadership team of Camp Co-Directors Les Hartsman and Jamie Kudlats along with Erin Gladman who

was recently promoted to Assistant Director.

Looking ahead to the coming summer, we're excited that we will be adding visits to the Portage Store after canoe trips, which in the past was something campers always loved but had to be changed due to the pandemic.

On the sunny shores of South Tea, we're thrilled by our new Boathouse which our fall crew masterfully built. At the same time, new clean motors have all been updated on our fleet, while Libby has been working hard on updating all of our windsurfing equipment which will surely result in a major renewal at that activity.

As we pride ourselves in being a Jewish camp, we're hoping to welcome some Israeli staff this summer, for whom being in Algonquin Park will be particularly therapeutic given the difficult period Israelis have endured courageously since Oct.7.

To be sure, it's been a challenging fall for all of us experiencing the pain, sadness and worry in connection with what's been going on in the Middle East. We know there are many families who have family and friends in Israel and they are all in our hearts and prayers. May peaceful times lie ahead.

Diane and Michael Owners, Camp Tamakwa



TAMAKWA 2024 HERE WE COME!

Directors weigh in on another summer for the record books. BY LESLIE HARTSMAN, JAMIE KUDLATS AND ERIN GLADMAN

This camp thing is pretty fun. What a gift it is to spend our summers in one of the most beautiful places on Earth, playing with kids and watching them grow. Now that we've been doing this for a few years, it's cool to be developing some history with so many campers and staff.

It's rewarding to watch Tamakwans grow from camper to CIT to counselor, and from counselor to activity leader to Head Staff. It's often been said through the years: There's little else out there that does as good a job as camp at nurturing and preparing young people to grow and become better versions of themselves.

Go ahead and throw Tamakwa 2023 into the record books with all the other magical Tamakwa summers. We say it every year, and this one was no different. Thinking back

on the summer brings a warmth and a smile, as we know it does for so many of you. From Tamakwastock, Talent Show, Survivor, Triathlons, Silent Disco, Surf & Sail Days, All Day Programs, Section Nights, Cabin Nights, Cookouts, Intercamps, Teaser Day, Mini Session, the plays (*Little Shop of Horrors*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Hair Spray*), topped off by an amazing Final Banquet, there was no shortage of good times in 2023 during which we made incredible memories together!

As always, Tamakwa 2023 would not have been possible without an amazing group of people. From our counselors and specialists to our activity leaders, from our transportation, facilities, and spring and fall crews to the hardest working kitchen staff in the business. From an office and administrative team that made sure camp ran



like a well-oiled machine to a tireless trip staff taking out over 100 trips in the Park and beyond. From section heads to programming staff. Yes, camp is great, but it's the people who make it truly magical. We are blessed to work alongside such an exem-

plary group of people.

Lastly, to our longtime mentor and friend, Vic Norris: there's no one whose advice we value more, or whose yokes make us laugh harder. To Michael and Diane: your ongoing love and support for us and for camp is inspirational. We

are forever grateful to be surrounded and supported by these incredible people.

Energized by the magic of Tamakwa 2023 (and a restorative Rest Hour during the off-season), we're ready for Tamakwa 2024. Here we come! Leslie, Jamie, and Erin



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THE SUMMER AT A GLANCE

A selective listing of major events and other memorable highlights from the 2023 season



JUNE

- 12 Mon. – Trippers arrive
- 13 Tues. – Trippers wilderness first aid course begins
- 14 Wed. – Head staff arrive at camp
- 15 Thurs. - Headstaff; transpo; and kitchen staff White Caps
- 17 Sat. – Head staff bike adventure; tripper White Caps and trip skills
- 19 Mon. – Activity leaders arrive; trippers’ trip departs; activity leader icebreakers
- 20 Tues. – Activity leader White Caps; miniature medley evening program
- 21 Wed. – Activity leader proprietary notion with Vic; staff beach party; activity leader group silent paddle
- 22 Thurs. – General staff arrive; staff sorted into Harry Potter houses for Dining Hall seating arrangement; staff social; head staff and activity leader show
- 23 Fri. – Ropes training begins; staff White Caps; trippers’ trip returns; all-staff PPP
- 24 Sat. – Staff activity assignments; water safety chat; emergency drills session; Seal team practice; history of camp with Vic; directors block party
- 25 Sun. – PCOC training; P-store night
- 26 Mon. – Staff first aid training day; all staff Harry Potter themed medley evening program
- 27 Tues. – Staff trip skills; med chats; Heart to Hartsy; pre-camp video retrospective
- 28 Wed. – Med chats continued; FIRST SESSION BEGINS. Campers arrive; cabin night
- 29 Thurs. – Block Schedule All-Day; Beaver Council nominations; camper PPP; staff show evening program; Twilight JT Parachute Games, Half Court, Arts and Crafts@Art Deck-O, Fishing
- 30 Fri. – Block schedule All-Day continues; Forester trip skills; individual choice sign up; first Friday night services of the summer; Beaver Council speeches and elections

JULY

- 1 Sat. – Individual Choice begins; Pokémon GO evening program; staff clothing expo; Twilight Jewellery Making, Non-Campfire Campfire Sing Along, Clay Sculptures@The clay room
- 2 Sun. – Canada vs US inline hockey shore lunch; Trailblazer Trip Skills 4th and 5th; section night
- 3 Mon. – Cookout
- 4 Tues. – Tamakwa’s Got Talent; 16U hockey intercamp tryouts; Twilight 12U hockey tryouts; JT twilight half court, Two ball tournament@Platforum; Kayak Handball, JT Art, Open Canoe
- 5 Wed. – Survivor Day; 15-day Temagami trip departs; Super Snack for Staff
- 6 Thurs. – What’s for Lunch Next Wednesday? all-day program
- 7 Fri. – Bar Down visits Tamakwa and plays Tamakwa in hockey (Tamakwa wins!); 13-day trip departs; 49er Lunch BBQ; Friday night services and Hobby Hubs; Twilight 12U intercamp hockey practice; Twilight sculptures, Open Canoe, JT Fishing, JT Fun@Camp TV
- 8 Sat. – Manitou@Tamakwa Intercamp; *The Tamakwa Show* (play); Individual Choice sign-up for Week 2; Staff Family Feud@staff rec
- 9 Sun. – JT Triathlon; Pioneer Dinner BBQ; section night
- 10 Mon. – Cookout; 10-day trip departs
- 11 Tues. – Canoe special guest Stu Farber arrives; Bounce@Tamakwa; camper dance evening program and staff silent disco@Rec Hall; Twilight practice for “The Nate,” Open Canoe, Fortune Teller Making@Art Deck-O; Jewellery making, High Ropes
- 12 Wed. – Treasure swim; 8-day trip departs; Ranger Dinner BBQ; Casino Night@Dining Hall; Twilight dodgeball@Platforum; JT Freeze Dance
- 13 Thurs. – Surf and Sail All-Day; Around the world evening program
- 14 Fri. – Teaser Day; Voyageur BBQ; Bar/Bat Mitzvah night
- 15 Sat. – Third Individual Choice sign-up; Harvey Deutch Camper Triathlon; JT BBQ; Tamakwastock evening program; Twilight open reading, JT Compass Games; Ultimate Frisbee; staff improv night
- 16 Sun. – Two-week campers depart
- 17 Mon. – Cookout
- 18 Tues. – CIT BBQ; Halloween Night
- 19 Wed. – Long trip returns; Airbands@The Art Deck-O; Mini-Colour War break
- 20 Thurs. – Mini-Colour War - Rescue Mario
- 21 Fri. – Packing and cleaning day; Mini-Banquet; *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (play)
- 22 Sat. – First Session departure day; Visitors Day
- 23 Sun. – SECOND SESSION BEGINS. campers arrive; block schedule all-day; cabin night; Canoe special guest Barry Rosenfeld arrives
- 24 Mon. – Block schedule and Individual Choice sign-ups; Beaver Council nominations; Who Dunnit evening program
- 25 Tues. – Beaver Council presents Throwback Day; roller rink@Platforum; Disco dance evening program@Rec Hall
- 26 Wed. – Trailblazer Trip Skills; Twilight ropes@ropes course, Open Canoe; clay sculptures@The clay room, Half Court; JT's dodgeball tournament@Platforum; Lacrosse with guests Brooker and Ally; Cabin night; Staff Super Snack
- 27 Thurs. – 49er BBQ; Twilight basketball@Platforum; Campfire songs, Fortune-teller making, JT twilight Kickball, JT Knitting, JT Sand Castle Building@Swim Docks; Lacrosse with guests Brooker and Ally; Highland Games evening program
- 28 Fri. – Friday night services and Hobby Hubs
- 29 Sat. – ODF and Art Tom Thomson Day Trip; Individual Choice sign-ups; JT BBQ; Tamakwa’s Got Talent 2; Twilight book club; Twilight inline hockey@Platforum, Half Court, Fishing; JT Big Canoe Paddle
- 30 Sun. – JT triathlon; section night
- 31 Mon. – Cookout; 2nd session 13-day trip departs; Canoe special guest Lesley Bishin arrives

AUGUST

- 1 Tues. – Twilight kickball, Book Club, JT Dodgeball Tournamen@Platforum; JT clay sculpture making; Tamakwa Stock Exchange evening program
- 2 Wed. – CITs go Tree Top Trekking; Pioneer 7-day trip departs; Ballfield Lunch; Staff baseball game; Treasure Swim; Twilight Open Canoe, Basketball, JT parachute games, Knitting; cabin night
- 3 Thurs. – 10-day trip departs; 3-day Art Trip to Lake Opeongo departs; Battle of the Brands all-day program; Twilight half court mixed doubles tournament, Inline@Platforum, Jewellery making, JT Climbing Wall, JT Clay Sculpture@The clay room
- 4 Fri. – Treasure Swim; Ray Kettlewell visits camp; Ranger BBQ; Friday night services and Hobby Hubs; *Hairspray* (play)
- 5 Sat. – Two-week session campers depart; Individual Choice sign-up; diner night; Twilight open archery, dance party@Loon Lodge, JT twilight canoe, JT tetherball tournament; Saturday Night Live@Rec Hall
- 6 Sun. – Harvey Deutch Camper Triathlon; Voyageur BBQ; section night
- 7 Mon. – Cookout; Forester 5-day trip departs
- 8 Tues. – Tamarack@Tamakwa Intercamp; Ugliest CIT EP; Canoe special guest Joey Niskar arrives
- 9 Wed. – Mini Session campers arrive; Senior Camper Lake of Two River Beach Outing; Pioneer BBQ; cabin night; Sue’s Super Snack for staff
- 10 Thurs. – Surf and sail all-day; ODF trip departs; Egg drop evening program@Loon Lodge
- 11 Fri. – Mini Session campers depart; Harvey Deutch Camper and Staff Triathlon; Friday night services and Hobby Hubs
- 12 Sat. – Highway swim; Long trips return; *Little Shop of Horrors* (play); Colour War break
- 13 Sun. – Colour War - Forbidden Island
- 14 Mon. – Colour War - Forbidden Island; Staff BBQ
- 15 Tues. – Packing and cleaning day; Final Banquet
- 16 Wed. – Campers and staff depart; conclusion of summer 2023

MARKING A MILESTONE

With a meaningful Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony, Tamakwa honours four staffers for their longstanding love for and loyalty to camp. BY IMAN ROOMI

On a beautiful Friday evening at the Slope in mid-July, campers and staff collectively extended a warm, much deserved Mazel Tov to those celebrating their Tamakwa Bar/Bat Mitzvah milestone in 2023. This year, camp paid tribute to four stellar Tamakwans – Maya Hochberg, Seth Hysni, Ross Hysni, and Bailey Goldstein – for the love and devotion each has shown for Tamakwa during their 13 summers on the Sunny Shores.

Every year, Tamakwa hosts a special ceremony recognizing those marking their camp Bar/Bat Mitzvah which family and friends of the hono-

rees also attend. For the BM honorees, the event is a high point in their Tamakwa careers, and not just because of the customized Roots jacket each receives from camp to mark the occasion. It's a watershed moment in a seminal journey that each of the honorees embarked on many years before, starting with a maiden voyage in the pointer from the landing to camp.

At the ceremony, Maya, Seth, Ross and Bailey made heartfelt speeches, each speaking about the enormous impact Tamakwa has had on their personal development and their gratitude for what they have



gained from camp.

Maya, the vibrant 49er section head this year, says she will always associate the jacket she received for her Tamakwa Bat Mitzvah with the countless lasting memo-

ries she has made at camp, along with the important lessons she has learned and the friendships she has forged over the past 13 years.

Tamakwans often say that connection and

growth are what keeps them coming back every year. The 2023 BM honorees, like those in previous summers, exemplify those factors through their tremendous care and attention to all those

under their supervision. They helped create such an upbeat, embracing community that channeled the Tamakwa spirit during events like Colour War and Intercamp.

When asked about their legacy and the effect Tamakwa has had on them, the four said, each in his/her own way, that camp has helped them to step outside of their comfort zones and grow into their authentic and unapologetic selves. In return, since becoming staff members, they've worked hard to create for campers the same type of nurturing, welcoming environment in which they themselves thrived when they were younger.

PRIDE OF PLACE

Inspired by one of the age-old, physical icons of Tamakwa, the 2023 year-end plaque was warmly received at the final banquet. BY PIERS GIFFIN

Each year, as the summer's conclusion nears and the echoes of laughter and camaraderie fill the air of the Dining Hall on the last night of camp, something special takes place that's by now a cherished tradition. One of the main highlights of the Big Banquet is the presentation of activity plaques and awards, and the unveiling of the year-end plaque. This heartwarming event marks the culmination of a season filled with growth, friendship, and unforgettable experiences.

Tamakwa, a haven for those seeking adventure and personal development, has always stood for fostering unity and lasting connections among campers and staff. A visual testament to this mission is the annual plaque, representing the collective journey of Tamakwans every summer. Given Tamakwa's long history, it's little surprise the Dining Hall's interior is adorned with so many plaques, each evoking a piece of the camp's past.

The focus of much an-

tipication throughout the summer, staff and campers look forward to seeing the finished plaque, which is shrouded in secrecy and mystery until it's finally revealed at the banquet. With its revered place at camp, being tasked with creating the plaque is no casual assignment.

"Making this year's plaque was both daunting and a welcome challenge," says Joe Bingham, 2023 plaque creator. "The daunting part was how high the bar was set following Sophie Linden's incredible plaques over the past several years. It was only after we had settled on the main theme of a pointer boat that I was confident, as long as I could get the scale and shape correct, the rest would be smooth sailing, no pun intended."

The pointer's iconic, time-honoured status at Tamakwa inspired Joe. He meticulously carved and painted the wooden boat, and used epoxy resin to create the water surrounding it. The names of nearly 500 campers and staff members from this year were printed on projector



sheets and clear-coated onto the deck of the pointer, giving the appearance they were handwritten.

"I personally love the pointers," says Joe. "To me, they are an inseparable

part of Tamakwa. Without them, camp wouldn't really be able to operate. Tamakwa has a rich history of pointers spanning nearly the entirety of its existence. I couldn't think of a better

way to pay homage to these incredible boats than making the one on the plaque big, three-dimensional, and, of course, red."

Achieving the desired result required great dedication on Joe's part.

"After I finished the plaque, I asked myself how many hours I spent working on it," he adds. "Starting with the original concept, then making a prototype, and lots of trial and error leading to the final plaque, it probably took me around 130 hours, maybe more."

Like other major endeavours at Tamakwa, it takes a village to produce something as significant as the plaque. Though Joe was the maker of the plaque, he received help from others. He sat down with David Stringer to learn about the history of the pointers, picked Ric von Neumann's brain on the construction of "Big Red" in 2009, and consulted Libby Sadick von Neumann, who's responsible for restoring camp's three pointers each spring.

"Special credit goes to Stringer, Ric, and Libby,"

says Joe. "I couldn't have done it without them."

The final night of camp is always emotional, made more so by the plaque ceremony. This time, true to tradition, when the plaque was finally unveiled, campers and staff applauded loudly, later gathering around it to examine it more closely and to find their names. For many, it was a bittersweet moment, knowing it also signified the culmination of their summer on the Sunny Shores.

"I'm incredibly grateful for how well it was received by everyone at camp," says Joe. "I'm happy to know that a part of me gets to live on at Tamakwa for hopefully many decades to come."

Like the plaques of previous years, all of which have pride of place in the Dining Hall, the 2023 year-end plaque is more than just a physical artifact. It's a creative testament to the enduring spirit of camp life, that began in the summer of 1936 and lives on today, surely destined to continue long into the future.

WHAT COMES TO MIND

A canoe tripper engages in free association about the summer just passed and time spent on trip in Algonquin Park. BY KRISTINA SOPIC

Tripping, paddling, swimming and portaging through Algonquin Park. An armada of canoes around each corner. Grumman and Kevlars, paddles everywhere. Centre flips and stern flips. Campers and families all around.

Blue lakes and bluer skies. Golden days and

silver days. Thick trees and beaten paths. Mud and rain. Bugs and bears. Moose and birds. Laughter and tears. Struggle and growth.

As the summer progresses and the trees go from the green we've known to reds, oranges and yellows, the brisker it becomes, like a warning of

the winter to come. Fewer and fewer people tripping through Algonquin Park until it's just the native inhabitants. Awaiting for next summer to come when visitors take their first steps back onto the portages again.

Until next summer, Tamakwa, Algonquin Park, trippers 2023.



OFF THE SHORES

Exploring the power of camp when you're not there, and why that's now more important than ever before. BY JONAH WITTENBERG

Every mid-August, on the last day of camp, we Tamakwans cry, reminisce and travel home. A few days later, we return to our normal routine. Instead of a bell echoing across Tea Lake waking us up, an alarm clock blasts us awake in the city. Instead of enjoying meals with people we'll remember for the rest of our lives, we eat a quiet bowl of cereal before school.

Since home seems like an alternate reality, what impact should camp have on us in the months we're far from it? I always like to refer to myself as a "10-and-2" kind of kid. Get through 10 months of responsibility, struggle and work, using the two months of happiness, fulfillment and transcendence I feel on the Sunny Shores as my reward. Tamakwa has evolved into a place of comfort for so many. Yet, it's important to always recognize the power it also exerts from September to June.

Humans naturally have a futuristic mindset. Our attention spans are only so



elastic, and we need a goal or motivation to drive us to accomplish things. Each person is different, with his or her "boat" driven by something distinct. In this case, Tamakwa is a massive source of motivation for all campers and staff and their pursuits in school, sports, work and life.

Regarding school, most students tend to be stressed by the end of the school year. This results from stressing over finals, anxiety about social life, and burnout. For Tamakwans, the imminent

prospect of camp and knowing they'll be rounding the bend in mere weeks provide a mental safe haven for those who need an extra push.

As our society becomes more aware of and seeks more solutions to improve mental health, Tamakwa provides a great home base for that search. For example, according to the organization Mental Health First Aid, a single act of thoughtful gratitude produces an immediate 10% increase in a person's happiness, and a 35% reduction in depres-

sive symptoms.

With mental illness issues increasing among those in the age group of campers, it's essential to learn good habits. We're all fortunate to attend Tamakwa, and to gain from its many benefits. To have a break from technology and not face withdrawal. To meet people who have genuine hearts and care about you. To learn important life lessons that set you up for future success. To experience unconditional happiness.

So, when you're feeling

down and upset during the year and need somewhere to turn, do your best to put Tamakwa in your mix of consciousness.

Tamakwa also is a great place to help increase your mental fitness. These enhanced traits result from things like a canoe trip, and being given more responsibility as you become older at camp. At first, the canoe trip may seem daunting and draining. You wake up before sunrise, either sweaty or freezing, eat food from dirty dishes "cleaned" by campers, and embark on portages that seem like a marathon but are much shorter, sometimes only a kilometer in length.

As a CIT and counselor, you're put into more positions with consequences. Be that as it may, it's a blessing because you're set on a path of success as long as you make a positive and serious effort. Being a first-year junior counselor at only 17 puts staff at a significant advantage at home because as people mature, they gain a profound benefit from the

leadership and problem-solving skills they obtain at camp, no matter the age or how well-behaved the kids are. Additionally, they learn what a role model can and should be.

At Tamakwa, you become stronger through this because a new line is drawn as to what you feel is comfortable and fair. So, once you face a particular challenge at home, such as a long night of studying, you're more likely to pull through with a better mentality and result due to the obstacles you've faced and overcome at camp.

As you can see, Tamakwa is more than a place for someone to spend their summers. Its significance derives from its high impact, whether in the middle of the summer or in January.

As the summer of 2023 concludes, I'm confident that the lessons I've learned will stay with me through the most challenging and most comfortable experiences that I will face in the coming year, and I'm sure others are in the same boat as me.

TAMAKWA CIVILIZATION CURATED

To better understand life as first set forth by Unca Lou, the Tamakwa Museum, including additions from Summer 2023, provides a deep dive

Amid a summer's flotsam and jetsam at camp, certain items stand out in helping define each year. True to a now storied annual tradition, the Tamakwa Museum's senior management recently conferred on what to add to the permanent collection from the 2023 summer.

Fortunately, they're always on the lookout for things that shed light on Tamakwa civilization as lived each summer on the shores of South Tea Lake. They're committed to making such artefacts available for viewing by all anthropological students in good standing.

After decades of accumulating literally tons of material and contending with limited storage space, discussions continue about finding larger premises. For now, curators are maximizing the museum's current exhibition facility in its underground shelter on Adventure Island, offering tours every day except Good Friday and Schlect Tuesday.

Here are the items retained from Summer 2023 that have been recently added to the museum and are now on view under tight security:

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| 1. The fire ban meter | 10. Ethan's missing clipboard | Ellen | neck | 28. The Opeongo flying squirrels | sesame-free Ramen |
| 2. Justice for the Lobsters | 11. The alien costume from banquet | 16. 800? bottles of Gatorade | 23. The plant from <i>Little Shop of Horrors</i> | 29. Adam van Koeverden's engagement ring | 35. A very noisy Dining Hall |
| 3. A celebrity canoe instructor | 12. A "fallen" tree in Main Camp | 17. "Yes!" from Vic | 24. Celia Singer's anthem performance | 30. The C Plane | 36. Jason Media's Saturday Night Live monologue |
| 4. Giddy's boot | 13. Ainsley's bald head | 18. A missing jibbet | 25. The Yoke of the Day book | 31. A copy of Issue 20 of the <i>South Tea Echo</i> | 37. The magnetic screen doors for the back office and staff dining hall |
| 5. The missing boathouse | 14. Lenny Hochberg's Bat Mitzvah speech | 19. A pair of Crocs | 26. A single crutch | 32. The Partridge Twins | |
| 6. A staff fleece | 15. A voice memo from AD | 20. Steck's yellow hat | 27. Prince Harry's autobiography | 33. An MP3 player | |
| 7. Fred Armisen | | 21. Pajamas from the For-ester 5-day | | 34. 3A package of | |
| 8. A double rainbow | | 22. A navy Tamakwa crew- | | | |
| 9. A cake from Jigs | | | | | |



ONE WORD SAYS IT ALL

Choosing a word to best describe Tamakwa, and why. INTERVIEWS BY PIERS GIFFIN, ASSISTED BY PEARL GOLDENBERG AND AMELIA BELL

LEO GOLDENBERG, 9, Forester, Toronto, ON, 3rd year at camp

“Loud – maybe not always but have you ever been in the Dining Hall at meal time?”

TEDDY GALE, 7, Forester, Los Angeles, CA, 1st year

“Friendship – because you get to make lots of new friends at camp.”

EMMA WINTON, 11, Pioneer, Toronto, ON, 3rd year

“Amazing – just because it’s camp and camp is camp.”

INDIA GOLD, 9, Pioneer, Los Angeles, CA, 3rd year

“Beautiful – because there’s a lot of nature and there’s not much pollution.”

OLIVER BELL, 13, Voyageur,



Toronto, ON, 5th year
“Fun – because there are lots of fun activities at Tamakwa and you get to see your friends that you normally don’t get to see in the city during the rest of the year.”

ANNABELLE BROWN, 8, Trailblazer, New York, NY, 2nd year

“Great – because Tamakwa is lots of fun and there’s lots of cool stuff at camp.”

LUCY MOCON, 10, Pioneer,



Toronto, ON, 3rd year
“Home away from home – because your parents aren’t at camp but it still feels like home because it’s where you live during the summer. Also, because it’s corny.”

PEARL GOLDENBERG, 11, Pioneer, Toronto, ON, 3rd year

“Community – because everybody knows each other at Tamakwa and are always there for each other.”

AMELIA BELL, 10, Pioneer, Toronto, ON, 3rd year
“Peaceful – because what I like so much about Tamakwa is that it is extremely quiet, small and calm, unlike the majority of other camps.”

LIVE FROM SOUTH TEA LAKE, IT’S SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE!

Reflections on camp’s venerable comedic evening by a rookie Tamakwan who hosted the 2023 edition. BY JASON SZWIMER



As this was my first year at Tamakwa, I was obviously honoured when I got the nod to host camp’s most important evening – Saturday Night Live (SNL). It was amazing sharing the stage with camp legends like Max Norris, whose video sketches were epic, Ethan Wilder, who rocked it as a Weekend Update host, and Piers Giffin, the killer guitarist. They all crushed it up there.

The toughest part about hosting SNL at Tamakwa is trying to meet the high expectations. SNL has a rich history on the Sunny Shores, with Lorne Michaels being pals with the camp and legends like Gilda Radner and Chevy Chase being camp alums. SNL stands out from other performance evenings at Tamakwa. It’s all about having a blast and showcasing the awesome moments and quirks of what life is like at camp.

As in previous years,

SNL 2023 consisted of sketches and video interstitials covering the hilarious hijinks and antics staff and campers get up to. It featured performances from Tamakwa’s The Band, with a rotating roster of camp personalities, including staples like David Stringer

and Ric von Neumann. This year, we also had a cameo from SNL alum Fred Armisen.

I can write about the experience of hosting SNL because I’m literate. I’m also qualified thanks to my fish-out-of-water perspective from being new to



Tamakwa, which I talked about on stage.

As the SNL host, I spoke about things I observed at camp, which I was able to do because my sister recommended a great optometrist. I’ve always admired her perspective because she sees

things differently. Eventually, we realized she needs glasses, so now she sees normally.

As a newcomer to camp, I poked gentle fun at various aspects, like Tamakwa’s lively Dining Hall and the challenge of keeping the biffies clean. I

also couldn’t help but playfully call out Program Director Joe Bingham, who, despite being incredibly busy around camp, often appeared absent, leading people to assume he was doing nothing.

In my opening monologue, I jokingly pointed out that camp is a magical place where immature, emotional, and irrational people come together for the summer. We also have campers.

I felt somewhat anxious about saying that on stage, fearing it might upset the Head Staff. So, before going on, I ran my jokes by Vic Norris. He reassured me that nobody would get angry and made me feel welcome at camp, almost like I’d found my second home. He said, who are you?

I want to thank everyone involved in giving me the incredible opportunity to host SNL. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for an amazing summer, Camp Manitou.







THE BEAT GOES ON

Staying true to its storied tradition, the camp's resident band filled the air with great music, much to the delight of campers and staff. BY PIERS GIFFIN

Nestled amidst the pristine forests and shimmering lake of Camp Tamakwa, there exists a musical component that shines only a couple of times each summer. Floating through the air of Main Camp during Rest Hour, it livens up the stage at Tamakwastock and SNL. The harmonious sounds of The Band have been echoing through the pines and across the water, enchant-

ing campers and staff alike for generations.

In its storied history, Tamakwa has long been known for its commitment to fostering camaraderie, creativity and a strong sense of community among its campers and staff. An underrated manifestation of these traditions is the camp's band. It consists of a mixed group of Tamakwa icons and younger staff who dedicate part of their

summer to filling the air with music.

The Band has become a tradition and schtick of its own, capturing a part of that "old Tamakwa spirit." Comprising of new staff members, veteran Tamakwans, and even occasionally, alumni, The Band embodies the camp's inclusive and welcoming spirit.

Its repertoire is a collection of "throwbacks," covering a range of musical

genres as long as they were written and released before the 21st century.

"We can play anything as long as it was released before 1969. Of course, there are exceptions, but that's my general rule," explains David Stringer, long-time member and leader of The Band. Under the guidance of David and Ric Von Newman von Neumann, the band takes form every summer. Throughout The Band's many years, it has seen a revolving door of members. Most famously, Dan Aykroyd made a guest appearance in the 1990s.

"There was a big flurry in anticipation for Dan Aykroyd's appearance on the Shores," David explains. "I don't think Ric had played bass in years, but he picked it back up for the occasion. The band members learnt all the Blues Brothers songs, thinking it would be a good schtick and that Dan would already know them from his time on set. Well, when he got here, he didn't remember the lyrics, so it didn't really matter. In the end, they pulled it together

and put on a great show."

Though Dan Aykroyd has been notably missing from The Band for a few decades, his legacy lives on through songs and spirit. This year, The Band was made up of David Stringer on lead guitar, Ric von Neumann on bass, Jason Szwimer on drums, Connie Young on keys, and yours truly on rhythm guitar and vocals, with special guest vocal performances from Joey Sifen and Leslie Hartsman.

The Band had a second run during fall camp this year with a slightly altered lineup. During Alumni Camp, David, Ric, and me again reprised their roles with Joey Sifen and alumnus Roger Brown stepping in to fill the drums and keys positions respectively.

"It's a challenge to get The Band together every year," says David.

It's a job made easier if all the members from the previous summer return to the Sunny Shores. If not, it can be an interesting challenge to sniff out Tamakwan staff who can and are willing to lend their

musical skills to The Band. Recruiting is only half the battle.

Once the members are assembled, there's the need to create a set list they're all happy with, and to find time to rehearse. Which, given everyone's different schedules, roles, and responsibilities, can be easier said than done.

At Tamakwa, The Band is more than just an ever-evolving musical group; it's a living testament to the camp's enduring commitment to tradition and schtick, creating a sense of belonging and capturing a piece of that "old Tamakwan spirit."

Year after year, Ric and David lead The Band, passing down their love for music and tradition to the next generation.

As Tamakwa continues to thrive and evolve, The Band remains a vital yet underrated thread in the tapestry of camp life, weaving together memories, friendships, and melodies that will resonate with campers and staff long after their summers there have ended.

THE ZEN OF BEING PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Confessions abound after spending one's first summer in one of Tamakwa's senior positions. BY ETHAN WILDER

Until 2022, becoming Program Director at Tamakwa wasn't something I'd ever seen for myself. Last year, when I learned I was in the running for the position in 2023, I didn't expect it to happen. Sure, I was interested in programming at camp and giving it a shot, but I wasn't sure I'd have what it takes if I got the nod. Last January, to my surprise, Camp Director Les Hartsman offered me the position. Now, nearly a year later with Summer 2023 behind me, I'm glad I accepted the job.

Initially, as a first-timer in this position, I had to tackle countless new challenges, from making announcements to adapting to the busy camp schedule and perfecting time management skills. Most of what I learned came after I was thrown into the thick of it and had to learn by doing. I and the program team – Assistant Program Director Jake Godfrey and Program Coordinator Joe Bingham, along with assistance from Activity Leader Director Kara Tessier and Hartsy – began planning programs for the summer well in advance, with our initial meeting last April. At first, we met on a bi-weekly basis and then weekly as of May.

We discussed evening programs, theme days and even pre-camp events for the staff. As much as we planned ahead, I still

had little idea how things would all go until each event unfolded. The biggest learning curve? No matter how much you plan ahead, things don't always go the way you expect and you have to adapt.

Rain proved the bane of our existence this summer, affecting three of four all-day programs. Unable to do many of the initial activities originally planned for certain days, we had to be resourceful to create other programs. For example, instead of Capture the Flag at the Ballfield, we did trivia in the Dining Hall. Rainy day programming is a challenge like no other, as keeping more than 200 campers at a time entertained in the Dining Hall is no easy feat.

Indeed, entertaining a Dining Hall full of campers and staff was something nobody could have sufficiently prepared me for. Despite being sometimes loud with my friends, I was a very quiet camper and kept to myself. No counselor would've been able to get me up on stage in front of the whole camp.

Sure enough, years later in 2023, being in front of Tamakwans all the time was an inseparable part of being Program Director. My younger self would never have believed it. From making announcements at least three times a day after meals, to explaining evening programs, to closing out the night after



an event, I had to be in the spotlight constantly.

The first time I stood in front of all the staff in pre-camp, my body language betrayed the calm air I tried to project. Then came the whole camp, every single camper and staff, staring at me as I made announcements for the first time. The nerves never went away. However, as time went on, I became more comfortable being up there and making a fool of myself in skits to break evening programs, or dealing with the entire camp groaning every time

team is living, at minimum, a week in advance, sometimes much more. The job is all about preparation and being ready for what's to come. The work was constant for as soon as we finished with one theme day, it was onto the next. At times, it was stressful and exhausting but always extremely fulfilling.

I remember on occasion sitting with Jake and wondering how we were going to get everything done. There were sometimes 50 things to do in a day, such as finishing up a booklet for Colour War, getting materials together for an upcoming evening program and having to meet with 10 people about upcoming programs. The stress was overwhelming at times, but no, not debilitating because I loved what I was doing. Sometimes I needed to take a step back, breathe and have faith that everything would get done, for it always did.

Managing the stress was another learning curve and people often told me I needed to take a break, otherwise I was going to burn myself out and get nothing done.

Learning to manage the stress and when to get up in arms about something was probably the greatest lesson I took away from the summer. Sometimes I got stressed about staff members not being where I needed them, or a program going awry that didn't

require that level of stress and it never served me well. I really had to learn how to pick my battles and decide what was worth putting my energy toward.

Such was the learning experience when trying to get everyone quiet at any given time. This was, by far, the most unexpectedly difficult part of the job. I strongly disliked having to yell over people and often lost my voice. It's not an easy thing quieting down a room full of 300 people and having them stay that way. It's a skill I'm still learning as I think of new ways to approach this aspect of the job for next year.

All that being said, I loved being Program Director in 2023. Not every program was a win, but if people were still smiling and having a good time, I was happy and fulfilled. I never thought I'd take to the job as much as I did. Each day was a challenge, but also a gift as I learned a ton.

While I hope I did well this past summer, I know there's always room for improvement and I've already started thinking about 2024 and ways to do things differently and more effectively.

I'm looking forward to returning to the shores as Program Director to remind everyone that today is the first day of the rest of their lives. So, make it count Tamakwans!

GREAT MOMENTS IN THE FOOTLIGHTS

Tamakwans of all ages take to the stage in three productions that made for a memorable drama bill this summer. BY PIERS GIFFIN

Over the summer, campers and staff from diverse backgrounds and age groups transformed into budding thespians, captivating audiences with their extraordinary talents and passion on stage. From the young-

featured campers and staff who acted and sang in a jukebox musical with an original storyline connecting them all. Throughout the show, the audience roared with laughter and applause.

“The piano director,

demonstrated their creative storytelling talents, drawing the audience into a fun and zany world filled with song and dance.

The third and final play of the summer was *Little Shop of Horrors*, directed by Pippa. The 49ers and

The drama season wasn't only about the performances but also about the personal growth and development of the campers.

“I really enjoyed seeing the campers perform on stage and giving it a red

show, there's more to do than hours in a day. Cast schedules are also sometimes difficult to manage for rehearsals.

“The lack of time to put the plays together was definitely not easy, but we always managed to put

This inclusive outreach helped build strong friendships and foster a sense of belonging among the campers.

As the curtain fell on this year's summer camp drama season for the last time, the wonderful



est Trailblazers and Foresters to the Senior Campers and staff, the Steinhauer Stage was a hub of creativity and imagination. Each performance left a lasting impression on the crowd, showcasing the hard work, dedication and immense abilities of campers and staff.

Starting off the summer's drama bill on a strong note was *The Tamakwa Show*.

Written and directed by this year's Drama Director, Pippa Verduin, the play

Connie Young, and I were in contact with Tamakwa prior to camp to brainstorm some potential play ideas,” says Pippa. “We narrowed it down to four plays before the summer even started. However, some of these did change and I ended up writing a play myself, *The Tamakwa Show*.

The second production to grace the stage was *Hairspray*, a fan-favourite musical, directed by Connie Young. Young campers turned into actors and

Voyageurs took the stage by storm to deliver a fun and memorable production. When it ended, the audience was on their feet, giving the cast a standing ovation and asking for more.

“My favourite play to put on was *Little Shop of Horrors* as it's one of my all-time favourite musicals,” says Pippa. “The script for the show is very comical and the senior campers did a great job of bringing it to life. The audience seemed to agree, too.”

hot go,” adds Pippa. “It was so great to see how far they came from the first rehearsal and to see their confidence grow.”

Getting these theatre productions ready in time can be challenging. The longest period to put a play together this summer was 12 days while the shortest was merely a week. There's lots to get done in a very short period of time. Starting with the audition process, carrying through to rehearsals, costume and set design, to the final

something on the stage,” says Pippa. “I always attempted to have at least one rehearsal each day during these periods, but sometimes it proved difficult. All-day events, special programs, trips, and even forgetting, can get in the way of making the most of rehearsal time.”

Tamakwa's longstanding commitment to inclusivity was evident in every performance, as campers of all abilities and backgrounds came together to create exceptional art.

memories and experiences created lingered in the hearts of both campers and audiences.

Tamakwa has once again proven its wonderful staff and environment are a nurturing ground for budding actors and a place where young dreams come to life. Based on the successful 2023 season, it's evident the future of drama at Tamakwa is bright, thanks to its brilliant staff and the passionate young actors who graced the stage.

BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE KITCHEN

Life as experienced in the Dining Hall by a first-year member of camp's highly dedicated food team. BY KRISTIN SHELEPINSKY

Every day, at the sound of the morning bell, campers and staff slowly emerge bleary-eyed from their beds, eventually heading to a large building with green doors in Main Camp and a sign overtop that reads “Dining Hall.” Inside, kitchen staff and servers are busy with final preparations for the meal about to be served as a small crowd assembles outside.

Already awake and working there for hours, I push the kitchen doors open to reveal the grand Dining Hall. Activity, Colour War, trip and summer-end plaques adorn the walls and ceiling overhead. I'm at once nervous and excited – nervcited – when a senior staff member on the porch outside shouts, “Come and get it!” and hundreds of campers and staff barrel through the doors to find their seats for breakfast.

It's my first summer on Tamakwa staff, and all the faces in the Dining Hall are new to me. But they are warm and welcoming, not like the creepiness of



the half-broken clay mask faces on the 1985 summer-end plaque. Youthful JTs, Rangers, Pioneers, Voyageurs and 49ers, all full of smiles and bubbly laughter, sit patiently looking forward to Head Chef Phil and the kitchen staff's delicious food.

Behind the main kitchen door, just out of sight from the buzz in the Dining Hall, bug juice is being whisked by famous pantry lead Emanuelle and

her assistant Liam as they groove along to the Rata-touille song. Servers are placing plates of yummy food on their handy carts. We hear the roaring crowd as the white boxing bell is rung.

“Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz. Blessed are thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth, amen,” shout the campers,

and the meal commences.

Servers rush out of the kitchen with their full carts, careful not to spill or slip on their way to deliver the food to the tables of hungry Tamakwans. As the servers return to the kitchen for refills, Sous Chef Tom greets them at the counter with the words, “I'd do anything for Bruce!” as the servers and kitchen staff giggle, and later heartily agree in cheer, “I'd do anything for Bruce!”

Bruce, of course, bursts out into laughter.

The kitchen staff, comprised of Head Chef Phil, Sous Chef Tom, Special Diets Chef Ian, Baker Jigs, along with Claire, Josh, Dylan, Jill, Marine, Sven, Bruce, Emanuelle, Liam and myself, work together like a well-oiled machine. After arriving at camp from disparate places, it didn't take us long to transition from a group of strangers to friends, even family. While inside jokes are endemic to camp, the kitchen is particularly fertile ground for humour. Only counsellors – and sometimes on Friday nights, activity leaders – get to peek into the funny, entertaining behind-the-scenes world of the kitchen, always joining in on the laughs when they do.

Servers make runs back and forth from the kitchen to the tables to satiate hungry campers and staff. Kitchen staff seem in constant motion as they continue making and refilling the plates that empty. Once everyone is full, servers have a new task.

Instead of transporting food, they now deliver slop buckets and bus bins to each table where, amid the deafening sound of clamoring dishes, campers then carry out the stacking ritual. Finally, servers return to the kitchen with bins filled to the brim with dirty dishes and slop buckets. It's all hands on deck to get all of the dishes into the dishwasher to be cleaned for the next meal. Servers and kitchen staff work in unison, cleaning up the aftermath of the meal. The doors to the kitchen are closed, the Dining Hall microphone is turned on and announcements for the day are read. Another successful meal is done. I take a breath and feel a sense of relief. The intensity subsides, sure to return in a few hours for the next meal.

Working with my friends in the kitchen and being surrounded by the beauty of Tamakwa is a joy. I quietly, but excitedly, think to myself as we finish the post-breakfast clean-up, “This is my home for the summer!”

PLEASING THE CROWD

If you had to make everyone at Tamakwa smile, how would you go about doing it?

INTERVIEWS BY PIERS GIFFIN, ASSISTED BY PEARL GOLDENBERG AND AMELIA BELL

RAFA GOLD, 13, Voyageur, Los Angeles, CA, 3rd year at camp

"I would put my foot in my mouth."

SAMANTHA PODBERE, 12, 49er, Toronto, ON, 4th year

"I'd make sure everybody gets tuck because everyone loves candy!"

SARINA HAUSMAN, 14, 49er, Los Angeles, CA, 2nd year

The best thing I could do would be to make my chocolate cookies and hand them out to everyone."

CONOR PINCHUK, 9, Forester, Toronto, ON, 1st year

"I'd give people extra privi-

leges like a movie night or extra dessert."

MIKEY SIGEL, 13, Voyageur, Toronto, ON, 5th year

I think the best strategy would be to make lots of good jokes, because that always makes me and other people laugh."

RYDER WILSON, 10, Ranger, Miami, FL, 3rd year

"To make Tamakwans smile, I would cancel instructional swim and have only free swim, because no one likes instructional swim."

RYDER PELKEY, 11, Ranger, San Francisco, CA, 2nd year

"I would open all activities and you can walk to anything."

REUBEN GLICK, 10, Ranger, Toronto, ON, 3rd year

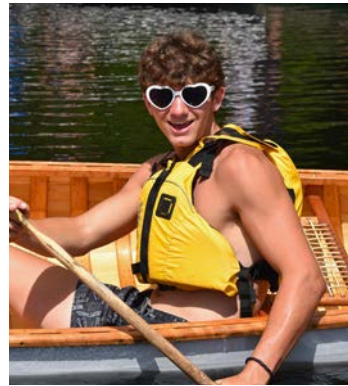
"You can't go wrong if you give everyone compliments. I would go into every cabin and compliment everybody."

OLIVIA ZIGELMAN, 13, 49er, Toronto, ON, 4th year

"I would make a really dumb joke because everyone would surely smile when they heard it."

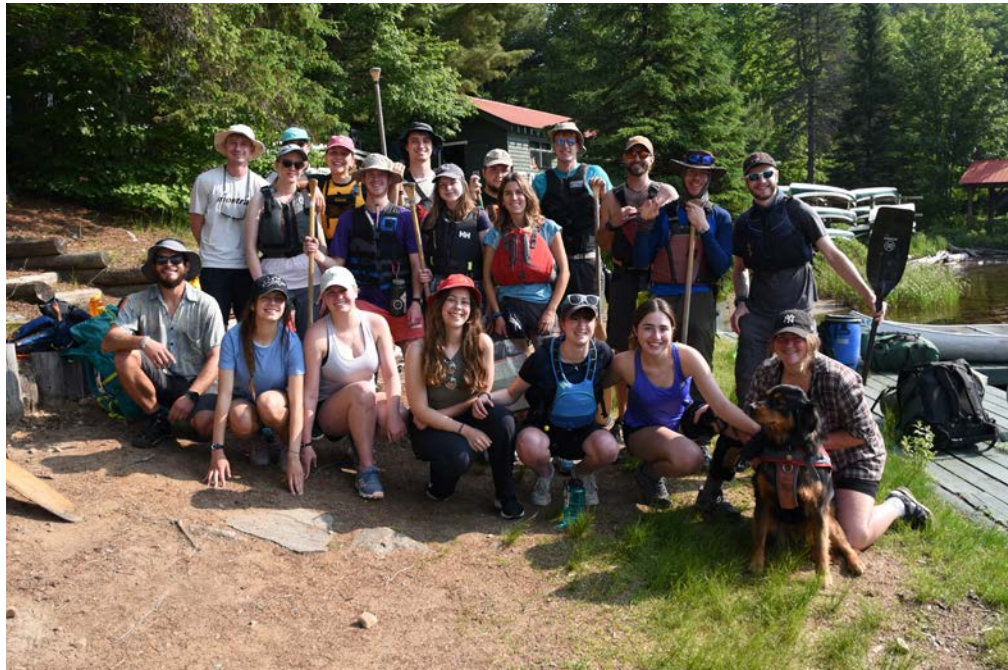
COHEN VALO, 6, Forester, Toronto, ON, 1st year

"I would make a movie night in cabins."



FOR THE LOVE OF PRE-CAMP

A veteran Tamakwan expounds on the satisfaction derived from helping prepare staff for the summer just ahead. BY BENNET MAGY



Camp; Consultant; Senior Recreations Inspector; Sail Director Emeritus. These are all made-up titles for myself to describe why a 14-summer Tamakwa veteran took a break from the tech-world to help out during Pre-Camp. My basic responsibilities included helping the camp orient new staff, setting up sailing equip-

ment and serving up some good shtick.

This was my third summer as a Pre-Camp visitor after having taken a three-summer hiatus due to the pandemic. In mid-June, I arrived the same day as the Activity Leaders (ALs) and departed the day after the kids arrived. It may seem odd to want to come to camp only until

the day the star attractions arrive but Pre-Camp is my preferred time at Tamakwa. Simply put, camp before the kids is my favourite vacation spot in the world.

There's really no other place that I'd rather holiday than the often sunny – but this year smokey – shores of South Tea Lake. The amenities are outstanding.

Camp offers all-inclusive breakfast, lunch and dinner, along with a late night snack. It includes complete waterfront access for bathing and boating alike. It even has a 24-hour gym room – that I didn't enter even once. The only cost for me was the cost of airfare from California to Toronto, so the value is simply unmatched.

I'm, of course, only joking. Pre-Camp is so much more to me than a vacation destination. Despite the lack of campers, I viewed myself as effectively a counselor to the new staff. I was there to both mentor them and engage in all sorts of fun activities with them.

Helping out at Pre-Camp was the most fulfilling part of my year. From the start, I made it my mission to get to know as many of the new faces as possible. Due to not having been at Tamakwa since 2019, most faces this summer were new to me. I wanted to ensure that every new

staff member felt like they had at least one friend on the shores within their first day.

I hit the ground running from day one during the bus ride with ALs and counselors pursuing their Bronze Cross certification, by getting to know most of them and preparing them for some of the unusual quirks that the summer had in store.

As Pre-Camp progressed, I got involved whenever possible. I practiced one of my favourite camp principles, "With over Watch," which means don't just watch, get involved.

Some of my adventures included taking the full White Cap swimming test, lending my advice in seminars, giving a Friday night speech, mischievously rearranging letters on camp buildings, and reprising my 2005 rendition of "A Whole New World," but this time as Kermit the Frog and Ms. Piggy.

Other highlights in-

cluded getting schooled in Euchre with all the Junior Counselors, schooling them back on the foosball table, jamming out to some classic Beatles songs in the recording room, building a (mis)fortune teller in the art room, and helping people find their way back to their cabins at night. I felt like I experienced a complete summer in my just 10 days there. In that short time, I felt I made friendships that I hope will last my lifetime.

It was such a pleasure getting involved and helping each staff member have a fun Pre-Camp and get prepped for the summer ahead. It added to my connection to Tamakwa, which has shaped me into the person that I am today. I continue to overflow with love and passion for the place. I hope I can continue to give back to camp in future Pre-Camps. Who knows, there might be another full working summer in store for me at some point.

A KEEN SENSE OF ABSENCE

Having grown up at Tamakwa, spending the first summer away from the Sunny Shores triggers a longing for many things. BY JESSIE NORRIS

Up until this year, I had never missed a summer at Tamakwa. Being away from camp while it's running is the hardest feeling I can think of, especially knowing everyone was there and I was not.

Not only did I miss the spectacular physical beauty and scenery, I longed to see my campers and friends who I love so much. From the everlasting traditions to the glittering stars, so many things about camp were sorely lacking from

my summer away from the Sunny Shores.

Here's what I missed most about my favourite place in the world, in no particular order:

•••••

1. The roots in the ground and rocks that I have memorized
2. Waiting in line for Monday morning brunch
3. Tapping Lucky Log at the beginning of a canoe trip
4. Looking out at the islands from the top of the Slope

5. Being woken up by the sound of the bell

6. Singing Taps to the tune of a piano

7. Campfire songs on Monday night after a cookout
8. The accomplishment of finishing the triathlon
9. Playing stacking games at the table in the Dining Hall
10. Going puddle jumping
11. Having a shore lunch at the ballfield
12. The sound of waves against the docks
13. The moment of silence and reading of the 23rd Psalm at Friday night services
14. Going for a peaceful

15. Jumping in the lake at Robbie's Point

•••••

The above list is not comprehensive as there's an endless number of things that I will always miss about Tamakwa. This past summer has taught me, more than anything, to be grateful for the many summers I was fortunate to be able to spend at camp and to never take for granted the time I get to spend there in the future.



VICTORY AFTER THE TRIBAL BANQUET

Inspired by a reality TV show, the *Survivor* special day program marks its 20th anniversary at Tamakwa. BY MITCHELL BEALLOR

Who will be Tamakwa's sole survivor?" For 20 summers, these iconic words conclude the break and kick off one of camp's most storied special programs. First started in 2003 by current Camp Director Leslie Hartsman, Tamakwa's *Survivor* special day aims to bring the famed television show to the sunny shores of South Tea Lake.

Indeed, it's derived from the adrenaline-pumping reality TV show, *Survivor*, that arrived on screens in 2000, revolutionizing the genre with its electrifying blend of competition and human drama. Conceived by Charlie Parsons, this global sensation takes contestants on a pulse-pounding journey, placing them in some of the world's harshest environments. What sets *Survivor* apart is its cunning strategic gameplay.

Contestants battle not only the elements but each other, competing in exhilarating challenges for rewards, immunity, and game-altering advantages.

The tribe that fails faces the tribal council, a ruthless arena where alliances are tested, and a single vote can banish a tribe member from the island. Guided by its host, Jeff Probst, *Survivor* delivers suspense, trust, betrayal and breathtaking moments.

At camp, for Tamakwa's version of *Survivor*, each cabin becomes a castaway, vying to be the coveted champion. Counsellors and campers dress up in their theme to show their spirit during the day and motivate themselves to the hall of champions. Everyone comes to breakfast with their drybags and lifejackets ready to go on cookout. After breakfast, competition begins with the first round of section challenges. Each activity in the first round aims to test the cabin's physical strength, stamina and strategy.

Following the first round, the infamous tribal council at the Beachers begins. Each cabin is on the chopping block to be sent off the camp island. When a cabin is kicked off



the island, they're given cookout supplies and are sent, by canoe or by foot, to one of the many offsite destinations used during cookout days.

To avoid being kicked off the island, the cabin can play an immunity idol, hidden around camp. Once the idol is played, it can no longer be used, and that team can be eliminated at the next tribal council.

Following the initial tribal council is the silent lunch, where the remaining contestants enjoy one more meal in peace before enduring their next test and potential misfortune. Two more rounds and tribal councils follow Rest Hour, continuing to test both campers and counsellors, aiming to break their spirit and send them away.

For the five cabins lucky enough to make it through all the primary rounds and into the semi-final, the Tribal Banquet is served. Similar to the special meals given out in the TV gameshow, Tribal Banquet has everything the contestants could wish for.

After dinner, all those

sent on cookout return to watch both the semi-final and final competitions. Both events are staff events aiming to highlight teamwork and resourcefulness.

Of the five teams that compete in the semi-final challenge, only two castaways make it to the finale. The final showdown is the ever-challenging rope burn. Each team is given only a box of matches. Once the rope burn commences, the counsellors run to collect wood to build a fire that will burn through the rope. The first team to burn through their rope is crowned champion and named as that summer's sole survivor.

Survivor is intense and brutally difficult. Although it's not a colour war, campers and staff always talk about the importance of winning this day. It's the only day where campers compete with their cabins as one unit to complete the impossible. It is a day every summer to be remembered. As long-time Tamakwan Jacob Ellenbogen would say, "Camp just isn't camp without *Survivor*."

VISITORS DAY 2023

A WINDOW INTO CAMP LIFE

For the first time since 2019, Tamakwa hosted Visitors Day, offering families of campers a glimpse into the magic of camp. BY PIERS GIFFIN

Nestled in the heart of Algonquin Park, Tamakwa, renowned for its rich history and tradition of creating lasting memories for campers, opened its gates to an enthusiastic crowd of parents and families for its first Visitors Day in four years.

A cherished tradition at Tamakwa, Visitors Day offers parents a unique opportunity to step into the world their children have inhabited for weeks, and to witness firsthand the growth, camaraderie, and

fun they've experienced. It's a chance for families to reconnect and bond in a beautiful, natural setting.

On Saturday, July 22, the day kicked off with an enthusiastic welcome by camp directors, staff and campers, as visitors arrived on the sunny shores by pointers and other boats. They were especially elated given it was the first V-Day since 2019 due to pandemic-related restrictions.

The warm morning air was filled with laughter as parents joined their chil-

dren in their home away from home. Some, who were setting foot at Tamakwa for the first time, went on guided tours around the camp, while others shared fond memories of their own camp experiences.

An integral part of Visitors Day is the lunch. The Dining Hall was filled with the inviting aroma of freshly prepared camp-style food while just outside in Loon Lodge, the legendary 'Hermelin Barbeque' served its usual delectable treats.

Families sat together outside at picnic tables, or in the Dining Hall, reminiscing and sharing stories while savouring hearty camp fare.

Throughout the day, visitors marveled at the scenic beauty of Tamakwa. The lush forests, pristine lake, and serene ambiance served as a backdrop for the series of activity demonstrations conducted by staff and campers, offering a glimpse into some of the time-honoured appeal of Tamakwa.

As the sun began to set, a number of families gathered at Main Camp to say their goodbyes. Visitors Day came to an end with hugs, laughter, tears, and a renewed sense of connection among families. For many, it was a bittersweet goodbye, but the memories created will undoubtedly be lasting.

Not just a window into camp life, Visitors Day provides an opportunity to families to experience the wonder and joy that Tamakwa imparts to camp-

ers. It's a reminder of the powerful bonds created in the great outdoors, and the importance of fostering a sense of community, adventure, and lifelong friendships.

As the campers returned to their cabins, and the families made their way home, the echoes of laughter and the warmth of Visitors Day lingered in the air, a testament to the enduring legacy of Tamakwa and the bonds it creates among campers and their families.







FROM DISTANT LANDS TO THE SUNNY SHORES

Why Tamakwa has a particular allure for non-North American staff, for many of whom one summer isn't enough. BY DANNY THOMAS



Many international staff at summer camps see the experience as part of a bigger picture. They consider it an easy way to procure a work permit and then have access to travel around the country after camp ends.

For most, it's a one-time, once-in-a-lifetime experience to kickstart bigger travels. It usually includes a culture shock, a time to feel like you're in a movie, and then ultimately head back to one's home

country.

However, at Tamakwa, many of the international staff, myself included, make the grueling effort to fly from distant continents to return to the Sunny Shores. So you may be wondering what draws us all back?

Each day at camp is exhaustingly entertaining. With activity-filled mornings where you try new things with your campers, build on your own skills and see the camp-

ers improve, time seems to escape. Then, into the evenings which are just as busy, with ever-changing programming like talent shows, camper/counsellor hide and seek, the list goes on forever. Finally, the sun sets, Taps is sung and you get lost in the twinkling stars as you head back to your cabin. Every day is different, and every day is better than the one before it.

The bonds you make at camp seem to be stronger

than anything outside Tamakwa. Coming from a different country, all alone, and being welcomed in as though you've been here all your life is something special. Staff are all always willing to help, will always say hey, and are always interested to know about where you come from, what you do at home, your whole life story. Within hours, you know everyone inside and out. Everyone is on the same team.

The prospect of canoe

trips always excite us international staff. Heading out with your cabin deep into Algonquin Park is something not many people ever get to do. Paddling through the stunning open lakes and then becoming engulfed by enormous, emerald green trees in the portages is astounding. Being surrounded by nature much different than what exists back home, you tend to see wildlife that's completely new and thrilling. If luck is on your side, you may see a moose. This will always be a surreal experience.

There's one thing missing, though. The main reason for coming back each year is the core that makes Tamakwa special – the campers. It's seeing them grow, come out of their shells, try new activities, jump in the lake, make new friends, explore nature, cheer in the Dining Hall, present Friday night services, dress up, joke around, tell stories about their days, completely be themselves, laugh, smile,

and have fun.

Yes, there are days when campers sometimes get homesick, but seeing them bounce back, revive their spirit and dive in head first to get back into camp life is something you can't easily describe. Without the campers, Tamakwa would be just another cabin in the woods, with no history, no stories and no fun.

Tamakwa is unquestionably an amazing place. With it sitting beautifully on South Tea Lake, a boat ride away from human civilization, it is its own world. This world is chaotic, exciting, loud, sometimes rainy, but it is always fun. It immediately reels you in and you become part of stories that remain between the cabin walls, you become a piece of the furniture, you become a Tamakwan. You eagerly await the long year ahead until you fly back from far away, get on a bus, board the pointer, round the bend and reunite with the Sunny Shores. Nothing beats it.

A TRIBUTE TO TAMAKWA'S FOUNDING FATHERS AND WHAT THEY CREATED

Reflections on learning about Unca Lou Handler and Omer Stringer and their lasting legacy. BY MICHAEL LANDER

Nestled in the heart of Algonquin Park, Camp Tamakwa transcends the boundaries of a traditional summer camp. Its essence is woven from the values instilled by its founders, (Unca) Lou Handler and Omer Stringer. For nearly 90 years, this haven has stood as a testament to an enduring commitment to goodness, kindness, growth, and community. It's these values that first drew me to the Tamakwa family, and it's this spirit, this legacy of values, that continues to imbue the golden and silver days of Tamakwa summers.

From the moment I was welcomed into the Tamakwa family, I began hearing stories of Unca Lou and Omer Stringer. Their legacy was embedded in seemingly every custom, tradition, and value at camp. I became interested in who these legendary men were, why they were so passionate about making children's lives better, and how did their rough and tumble attitudes set Tamakwa apart as a place that pushes people to be the best versions of themselves.

In my quest for answers, I scoured the Tamakwa archive, and spoke to anyone who knew anything

about Unca Lou and Omer. It was my conversations with Michael Budman, Vic Norris and Libby Sadick von Neumann in particular, coupled with my research, that prompted me to write what you're now reading.

Unca Lou, a towering figure in both body and spirit, brought the energy of a boxer and the wisdom of a referee to the Sunny Shores. The skills acquired in the boxing ring and as a referee weren't just for sportsmanship, also serving as a foundation for resilience, commitment, and fairness. A good camp director, much like a referee, stands for justice and equity, protecting the moral fabric of the community. It's this moral fabric, stitched together by Unca Lou and Omer, and further reinforced by countless other individuals over the years, which forms the backbone of Tamakwa.

Listening to the recording of Unca Lou's 1974 funeral, you hear Kal Bandalene begin the service by reading what he referred to as "the favourite words of Unca Lou Handler." These were, "Hineh ma tov umah na'im, shevet achim gam yachad." (Psalm 133:1), which translates into English as: "Behold,



how good and how pleasant it is for people to dwell together in unity." This psalm highlights the importance of what the Bible calls brotherhood, or what I call community and family.

Kal tells a story of Unca Lou's passion for peace-building between communities, especially in Israel, and how he connected with this particular psalm after a trip to Israel as a representation of the need for unity, for treating your fellow human being as part of

your family. This is a lesson we can all learn from today. The kind of deep care and love that come from treating everyone around you as family. That's part of the essence of Tamakwa.

With Unca Lou and Omer at its helm, Tamakwa brought to life the idea that toughness need not be devoid of warmth, and fulfillment and joy don't come from shying away from challenges. It's a place where the callouses of hard work coexist with the cozy

warmth of a giant hoodie, a hug around the campfire, double tuck, or the comforting words of a favourite staff member.

Unca Lou, the heartbeat of Tamakwa, was more than a director. He was a maestro of laughter and camaraderie. His love for jokes and banter was not only a source of joy but a cornerstone of the camp's identity.

He believed in the power of love and humour to unite people, to break down barriers and bring warmth to the wilderness, teaching campers to face life's adversities with a smile. This spirit still lives on today among the amazing campers and staff that make Tamakwa great. The echoes of Lou's laughter still resonate through the trees, reminding everyone that challenges, when met with humour, grit, and grace, become opportunities for growth.

Beside Unca Lou stood Omer, a man of unmatched resilience and fortitude. His mental and physical toughness, forged in the harsh realities of the Algonquin backcountry, working in lumber camps and guiding trips, was at the heart of Tamakwa's tradition of putting effort into accomplishing goals and

reveling in a job well done. His experiences infused the camp with a spirit of hard work, determination, and the belief that every challenge is an opportunity to grow stronger.

As Tamakwa looks to the future, it does so with the booming laughter of Unca Lou and the perseverance of Omer echoing through its tall pines. The camp remains a sanctuary where challenges are met with a twinkle in the eye, and where every member, past, present, and future, is part of the Tamakwa family – a family that calls for and fosters fortitude, and loves with all its heart.

In the heart of nature, Tamakwa is more than a traditional summer camp, shaping characters, facilitating lifelong relationships, true to the lasting legacy of its founders. It's my honour to help embody these values on the Sunny Shores, learning from and celebrating the spirit of its founders. In the tapestry of time, camp's core values of goodness, kindness, care for people and the land, adventure, bravery, leadership, hard work, community, and family continue to unfold as a timeless tribute to the vision of Unca Lou Handler and Omer Stringer.



CLEARING THE AIR

Wild fires fill the skies with smoke, triggering thoughts on whether values learned at camp can help our future leaders save the world. BY PETER LIPSON

It was a beautiful, late summer weekend in Ann Arbor, Michigan. A river of people sporting maize and blue, the official colours of the University of Michigan (U-M), flowed toward the Big House stadium for the football game.

But I wasn't there for the football. I had a reunion with the people I lived with while attending U-M. I hadn't seen them for almost 35 years. I had forgotten how well we knew each other, how many shared experiences we had. It was almost like seeing camp friends, but not quite.

One asked me, "So, did you send your kids to Tamakwa?" Did I! My eldest, my little Baby Ali, has been going there since she was four. (My youngest is following a different, equally amazing path.) I've changed her diapers in the camp's Doctor's Cabin. I've put her first paddle into her hands. And this summer, I watched as she helped run the same canoe dock I did when I was her age.

It was an interesting summer down at the dock, one in which I wish I could have played a part. Unfortunately, I could only escape my office for a week of doctoring during Pre-Camp. But not so for several of my old friends, canoeists who came up to camp for a week at a time to help out the young canoe staff. And each one reached out to me after their week

at Tamakwa, telling me what I already knew – that my little Baby Ali is an amazing adult.

I've been writing in the *South Tea Echo* for the past 15 years, a period that has seen huge changes in my life, and, if you're a camper or staff, likely in yours as well. Ali just started her second year of university. Before her amazing summer with her cabin and down at the dock, she thought this might be her last year at camp, that she should get a 'real job.' I told her she has her whole life to work 'real jobs.' You can't replace the experiences and friendships of camp, even while moving on to other adventures. The opportunities afforded by camp and the friendships we make there shape our lives.

Sitting around the dinner table half the night with my old college friends, all of whom took very different paths in life, I was struck by the things we had in common – we took chances, we didn't run from opportunities and we kept up with important friendships.

Every time I get on the pointer and round the bend back to the Landing, I wonder if it will be the last time I see camp. I've been lucky – I've always made it back. But we will all eventually become adults and there isn't some sort of Voyageur or 49er cabin for grown-



ups. Maybe you can't stay at camp forever, but while you can, you shouldn't miss the chance to be there.

Friends always ask me if camp has changed. The answer is simple – no. Or so I thought. But I spent a few hours talking to my friend Vic Norris and he corrected me. Perhaps superficially it's the same – there are kids up in the Park, in our little piece of paradise, having fun, learning, growing. But in the decades that Vic has been Director, camp has changed a lot – there are

new activities, new cabins and new ideas, all of which required time, work and money. And without daily attention from our directors and year-round staff, camp would be quickly buried by the northern forest.

That forest was a little different this summer. I arrived at camp on a beautiful June day without a cloud or a black fly in sight. The next morning, I woke up in my cabin to the distinctive smell of a wet campfire, that smell right after you pour water

on your fire and the steam and smoke leap up from the rocks. This was curious as there was a total fire ban in the Park at the time. I figured some of the staff had decided to sneak a little campfire in the night.

I wandered out of my cabin into a weird daylight. I looked up at the sun rising over Girls Camp and it was a thick, orange-brown haze that I saw. When I walked out into Main Camp and looked out at South Tea Lake from the Slope, I couldn't see the islands. All of camp, all of

Ontario, were covered in smoke from out-of-control wildfires that burned across Canada all spring and summer.

This was a real change for camp. I had to help develop various procedures to deal with 'bad air' days, had to order more medicine to treat those suffering from asthma. This was not normal, not at all. But it may be the new normal as the world's temperatures continue to rise with climate change. In the near future, we may find that the camp experience is very different from the one we remember.

I have hope though. I see the effect camp has had on young adults, like Ali, people who, in a short time, will be our leaders, scientists, politicians, and teachers. They feel the urgency of these problems much more acutely than my generation, and they want change.

In 30 years, I hope Ali sits down for dinner with old friends. I hope she will look back and see how her time at Tamakwa helped her to take risks, to grab opportunities, to create life-long friendships. Maybe, just maybe, these wilderness experiences, the values of cooperation and of taking care of the world just might help her and her generation save the world. Maybe they'll leave their campsite better than they found it.

DISPATCH FROM THE CANOE DOCK

With deep roots at camp, a veteran Tamakwan revels in the pleasures and satisfaction in being Visiting Canoe Director. BY STUART FARBER



This past summer, I was thrilled to be asked to be a visiting Canoeing Director at Tamakwa. As a Voyageur Canoeist, it gave me the opportunity to paddle every day and practice my rusty skills. Even better was being at camp while the sum-

mer was in full swing; after all, the "keedz" are what camp is really about.

In my short time at camp, I met and worked with many campers and staff of all ages. The youngest or newest campers would come to the dock not knowing what to expect

but ready to learn. Just like them, I had to learn or relearn how to teach the basic fundamentals – the parts of a paddle, the parts of the canoe and more. This was made easier by the exceptional staff on the dock for each period to help me with my job.

Teaching the campers and watching their growth and successes were the most gratifying parts of the job. Seeing the joy on someone's face when they suddenly felt the rhythm and usefulness of the previously awkward J-stroke was my joy. This was made

even better having the same dedicated canoeists come for every Individual Choice period working on the next award dreaming that someday they too will be a Voyageur.

One of the most fun days was when the "Teaser" kids visited camp for the day. This is when the pre-Tamakwa age kids visit for a day, go to various activities and learn what camp activities are all about. The "Teasers" were brought to the dock, each with his/her CIT buddy. They were given paddles – note to Hartsy – that were bigger than they were. Nevertheless, when they could or would focus, they were shown how to hold and use a paddle. Finally, they boarded the canoes for paddling in Canoe Bay. Many thanks to the staff who made that happen.

Speaking of staff, those assigned to canoeing (and you know who you are) were excellent. They put canoes in the water, pulled

canoes out and did this over and over and over again, every period, every day. They were diligent in their work and vigilant watching over the campers, ensuring not only their safety but helping to improve their skills. They worked on the dock and on the water teaching and directing the activities. Their hard work and dedication were very much appreciated.

Aside from my responsibilities at canoeing, I was also lucky to see the rest of camp in full swing. Main Camp gatherings, being on the Slope, in Loon Lodge, organized pandemonium in the Dining Hall, flag raising and lowering, and, of course, tuck! I watched the Harvey Deutch Triathlon and even met his namesake Harvee.

I was truly blessed to be welcomed warmly and included in camp by the staff, especially by those with whom I worked and all of the campers.



SIZING UP THE IDEAL JOB AT CAMP

Campers respond to the question, 'What is the best job at Tamakwa?' INTERVIEWS BY PIERS GIFFIN, ASSISTED BY PEARL GOLDENBERG AND AMELIA BELL

OLIVIA SOSIN, 16, CIT, Potosi, MD, 7th year at camp
 "Being a Senior Counselor is the best job because you get to spend time with campers and do lots of fun activities you wouldn't usually do."

JENNA HOFFMAN, 9, Trailblazer, Toronto, ON, 2nd year
 "For me, half-court activity leader would be perfect,

because I love half-court and it's really fun."

RORY MOGIL, 10, Pioneer, Toronto, ON, 3rd year
 "I'd say being a counsellor is the best job at Tamakwa because it allows you to be with kids and they pay you for it. I think it's the same experience as being a camper, except you have more privileges and you get paid."

AVERY RIFF, 11, Pioneer, Toronto, ON, 2nd year
 "I would be an SC because you get to hang out with kids."

LEO FOGEL, 11, Ranger, New York, NY, 4th year
 "In my mind, being an activity leader must be the best job because it would be really fun to spend most of your time at camp running an activity, especially

one you love so much."

JONAH DAVIS, 7, Forester, Birmingham, MI, 1st year
 "I love hockey so much that it would be my dream job to run the hockey program at Tamakwa."

MAX ZAMIR, 16, CIT, Toronto, ON, 8th year
 "Nothing beats being Camp Director because you get to run Tamakwa how you

want it to be run."

ELLA TROMPETER, 10, Pioneer, Huntington Woods, MI, 2nd year
 "Being an activity leader must be great because they get to hang out with all the kids most of the time."

ALEX TURNER, 14, 49er, Toronto, ON, 5th year
 "Based on what I've noticed during my time at Tam-

akwa, I believe the best job is being an activity leader because you get to do what you love every day."

GINA GERSHONOWICZ, 9, Pioneer, Huntington Woods, MI, 2nd year
 "If you're going to work on staff at Tamakwa, the best job is what the section heads do, because they get good food and they get to be with kids."

THE BEST "WORST" MISTAKE OF MY LIFE

What a difference between initial thoughts on arriving at the Landing for the first time and the feelings by summer's end. BY JIGYASA SHARMA

It still feels like yesterday when I saw the Indeed job posting for Head Baker at Camp Tamakwa and applied right away. I had no previous experience of working or ever being in the wild woods but Head Chef Phil Cowley still hired me, so it's on him. Hahaha.

I can't forget the day, early last June, when I arrived at the Landing. My heart was beating out of my chest. I couldn't see any walkway, only boats, and my instant reaction was, "I've made the worst mistake of my life."

For someone like me, who had never been in water and didn't know how to swim, the idea of jumping in a boat was traumatic, to say the least. But I just pretended to be cool, convincing myself that "No doesn't exist." The only reason I ended up boarding the pointer is because I decided I wasn't going to let my fear stop me from doing things I wanted to experience.

Everything changed as soon as I reached camp. I was welcomed with warm hugs, food and a bed ready for me. It felt so special how people received me. It was overwhelming.

I soon got to know most of the staff and their stories, such as how my assistant, Marine, is a full-time backpacking traveler, and how Ranger Dan



has served 11 years in the military. Learning about everyone proved inspiring for me.

Tamakwa made a big impact on me. It offers so much. To benefit, all you have to do is just come to camp with an open heart and mind. Let the moment decide before you decide it for yourself. By the end of the summer, I felt like a new person, with more values, knowledge, understanding and patience.

Working in the kitchen was such a positive experience. I've always enjoyed

making food for other people but the joy and the social interaction I got to do at camp because of my work is what counted the most for me. For example, one day on a busy afternoon, a group of 8 or 9-year-old campers came to me in the kitchen with fresh, hand-picked raspberries and blueberries. They asked if I could make something out of the fruit. It was so cute I couldn't say no. The next morning, when I saw the smiles on their faces after eating the jam I had made from what

they had picked, it just made my day.

Likewise, another time, a group of teenagers came to the bakery section in the kitchen and I showed them how to bake cookies with their favourite toppings. They were so cheerful and good-natured. It was nice to see how they followed the instructions perfectly. I have many other fond memories of moments like these.

My summer at Tamakwa gave me the experiences of a lifetime – my first time hiking, getting lost in the

woods, learning swimming, canoeing, archery, watching shooting stars, playing chess, going on a canoe trip for four days, getting our canoe flipped in Manitou Lake and other discoveries. I found happiness, tears of joy, lots of yelling and laughter, dancing, singing and new friendships.

I can't write about the summer without giving a special shoutout to the entire kitchen family with whom I had the pleasure of working. With my knee injury and being on crutches,

it wouldn't have been possible without everyone's help and understanding. I'm thankful from the bottom of my heart.

Tamakwa showed me the kind of community I want to live in, where people are filled with affection and care for others. I was so touched that whenever I would go from my cabin to the kitchen, I'd be offered a ride on the golf cart – which was fun BTW – or someone would hold my hand on tough paths or walk behind to look out for me.

I was mad at myself when I hurt my knee because I like to do things myself and my way. When I had to ask others for help, I felt sad as if I were incompetent but thankfully, I was in the best place I could be. Everyone made me feel involved, helped me and took care of me, making me feel I'm part of this big camp family.

It really cheered me up and now I also have a story to tell people of how I lost my crutch in the water at midnight on the cabin night out. Hahaha.

I'll be forever grateful that life brought me to this journey to Tamakwa which I had initially thought, when I first arrived at the Landing, was a big mistake. How wrong I was and how right Tamakwa was for me.

THERE ARE STRANGE THINGS DONE IN THE MIDNIGHT SUN

So begins the venerable poem, whose recitation was formerly a Tamakwa tradition, which David Stringer has now revived. BY PIERS GIFFIN

The sun sparkles across the water as it sets. Gentle waves lap on the shores of South Tea Lake. After a long day on cookout, as the warmth of the day fades with the sun, campers and staff file onto the Beachers facing the water. A fire is lit and the buzzing crowd quiets as David Stringer stands before the camp. Everyone is waiting with anticipation, the fire now roaring behind him. Stringer begins;

•••••

“There are strange things done in the midnight sun, by the men who toil for gold; The Arctic trails have their secret tales That would make your bold blood run cold; The Northern Lights have seen queer sights, But the queerest they ever did see

Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebarge I cremated Sam McGee.”

•••••

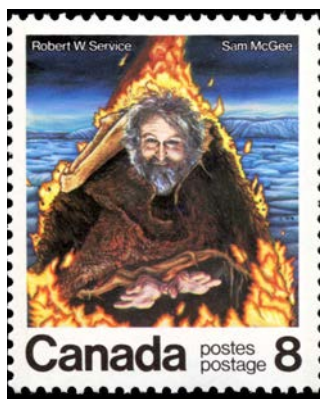
Tamakwans old and young know this poem by Robert Service. It’s steeped in years of tradition and nostalgia. Tamakwa co-founder Unca Lou Handler brought the century-old poem to camp. It was one

of his favourites. He would recite the story every summer, capturing the imagination of campers and staff alike. The tradition carried on long after Unca Lou’s passing in 1974, resulting in generations of Tamakwans all knowing the rhyming story. However, in recent years, the tale of Sam McGee seemed to have vanished from camp. That is until this past summer when Sam McGee and his chilling tale were resurrected by David Stringer.

“*The Cremation of Sam McGee* is a long piece, reciting it takes approximately five minutes to reach the end of the poem,” says David. “Unca Lou would often forget, mix up or make up lines as he went on. It drove me crazy!”

With so many verses, rhymes and words to remember, it can be a difficult challenge to complete by heart. Another aspect of reciting the poem is in the delivery.

“You have to tell a story,” adds David. “Where most people fail is when they fall into the rhyme scheme and become monotone. You won’t be able to keep anyone’s attention like that.”



Though the story itself is captivating, given its length, if the reciter isn’t just as captivating in his or her delivery, the poem is sure to fall flat.

First published in 1907, the poem takes readers on a treacherous journey through the frozen wilderness of the Yukon, a place where prospectors sought

fortune amid the unforgiving cold, hunger and danger. Even after all these years, its vivid imagery and unexpected twist make it a timeless and compelling read.

The Cremation of Sam McGee begins by painting a stark picture of the bitter cold and the harsh conditions faced by the characters. The narrator, one of a group of travelers, sets the stage for a harrowing adventure, with Dawson City as their ultimate destination, lured by the promise of gold.

The central character, Sam McGee, stands out as an ill-fated figure. His loathing of the relentless cold is palpable and he strikes a solemn deal with the narrator: to cremate

him once he passes away, sparing his body from freezing in the frigid Arctic.

As the narrative unfolds, the poem masterfully conveys the bone-chilling weather and the isolation of the wilderness, immersing readers in the dire circumstances faced by the travelers. When Sam McGee’s health deteriorates to the point of no return, the narrator fulfills his promise by building a fire and cremating his friend’s remains. The macabre scene is rendered in vivid detail, with the poem describing the hair on McGee’s head sizzling and his body melting away.

Just as readers anticipate a chilling and somber conclusion, Robert Service delivers an unexpected twist. McGee’s ghostly voice emerges from the flames, requesting that the fire be stirred hotter. In a surprising and ironic twist, McGee finds the warmth he longed for in life within the intense heat of the cremation fire.

This twist adds a layer of dark humour to the poem, leaving readers both astonished and amused. It underscores the idea

that even in the direst of circumstances, there can be a surprising resolution that challenges our expectations.

The Cremation of Sam McGee is a literary gem that explores themes of friendship, loyalty, human survival instincts and the formidable power of nature. It reminds us that life can sometimes present us with unexpected and paradoxical solutions to our most profound desires and fears.

As the years have crept by, many traditions at Tamakwa have come and gone and evolved. The reciting of this poem has stood the test of time, in no small part thanks to David Stringer. The eerie piece captivated Unca Lou’s heart and in turn, has burrowed itself into countless Tamakwans. So much so that it even found its way into the movie *Indian Summer*, memorialized forever. From one generation to the next at Tamakwa, Sam McGee continues to send shivers down readers’ and listeners’ spines while offering a unique blend of adventure, macabre humour, and the timeless allure of the Canadian wilderness.

TREATING PRE-TRIP JITTERITIS AND OTHER AFFLICTIONS AT CAMP

A doctor’s notes from the Clinic: things they didn’t teach us in medical school. BY DR. CLARE HUTCHINSON

As a pediatrician at North York General Hospital in Toronto, my day-to-day life usually involves taking care of children admitted to the pediatric ward, attending high-risk deliveries and teaching medical students and residents.

While I love my job in the city, nothing makes me happier than leaving my hospital badge at home, packing up my collection of Tamakwa sweatshirts and heading up to camp for the week.

Over my six years as a camp doctor at Tamakwa, I’ve learned a thing or two about how very different camp medicine is from hospital medicine, with its own nuances and quirks. Here are some of the most important lessons I’ve learned during my time at Tamakwa:

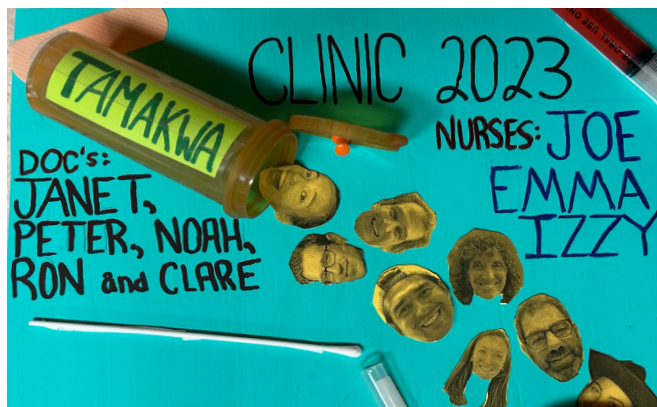
• **One cannot overemphasize the importance of proper footwear.** From twisted ankles suffered while navigating rough terrain around camp in Crocs to splinters in

camper toes from the dock, camp can be hazardous for the health of campers’ feet. Appropriate footwear is essential in both prevention and cure.

When a camper comes to the Clinic for a foot injury, our team lovingly disinfects the wound, dresses it in a bandage and provides strict instructions on wearing socks and shoes. Although highly fashionable, slides just won’t cut it when it comes to keeping the affected area clean and dry, leading to repeat visits and lots of sore feet.

The lessons on appropriate footwear are also important for the medical staff to heed. Although rare, on occasion one of the medical team may need to leave camp to assess a camper who’s been injured on cook out or canoe trip. While running along a muddy portage behind Tripper Alex, it’s preferable to wear old running shoes, as new white ones will never look the same.

• **Pre-trip jitters can manifest themselves**



in a variety of obscure medical complaints.

When a camper who appeared in perfect health only moments before is suddenly afflicted by a host of unusual symptoms, the first thing to check is their trip departure date. If they’re within 48 hours of send-off, they may be suffering from pre-trip jitteritis. Symptoms may include unobserved vomiting, severe sore throat, limping and general malaise. Happily, most cases are short-lived and respond quickly to Gatorade, reassurance and the occasional tough love chat from their counselor or tripper.

• **Chicken ball dinner**

is the perfect cure for stomach flu. Unfortunately, living in a communal environment can lead to infectious outbreaks such as pink eye, strep throat and stomach bugs. While hand hygiene is key in keeping campers healthy, campers with gastroenteritis may be required to stay overnight in clinic.

One of the most effective remedies is the news that chicken balls are on the menu for dinner that evening, often leading to decreased nausea and increased appetite. Similar effects can be observed with spicy beef or pizza bags.

• **Flaming marshmallows, Bronner’s soap and other miscellaneous eye irritants.**

Although a flaming marshmallow to the eye might not be the first concern one would have when dozens of children are gathered around an open fire, it’s not to be overlooked. Bronner’s soap, while useful for washing almost anything, shouldn’t be squirted directly into the eye.

• **Crowd control is the key to running an efficient clinic.** Campers may require multiple friends for emotional support when attending Clinic Call, often in inverse proportion to the severity of the medical complaint. The average splinter removal requires up to four emotional support companions.

A medical staff member with a loud voice can be essential to sorting out the patients from those who came for a social visit on the porch. Crowd control may be also required for campers who are admitted overnight and have large

groups of friends calling encouragement to them while they rest upstairs in the Clinic.

• **Keep your doctor friends in the city on speed dial.** Having a friendly plastic surgeon, orthoped, dermatologist, or dentist only a phone call away to field questions about broken bones, rashes and dental injuries is an invaluable resource to a camp doctor. Never will your network of colleagues be more appreciated than when you’re in the middle of Algonquin Park with only Dr. Google as your back up.

• **Jump off the tower, do the zipline, and get your hair braided at Tamakwastock.** Being a camp doctor at Tamakwa is an incredible privilege, and getting to be a part of camp life is the best part. Keeping kids healthy and happy, working with incredible nurses and sharing the joy of camp with campers and staff alike are what makes being a camp doctor so special.

DO YOU GET IT?

What does it really mean to get Tamakwa? Tamakwans may not be able to articulate it but they feel it.

BY STUART FARBER



A number of years ago, I heard my late lifelong friend Charlie Kraft say, “Tamakwa, some people get it, and some don’t.” Charlie came to it honestly. He was the son of Esta and Mike Kraft, and the nephew of Unca Lou and Phyllis Handler. Esta was Unca Lou’s sister and was a

part of camp from its very beginning. Charlie literally grew-up at camp which put him in a position to ‘get’ (understand) Tamakwa.

You might be asking yourself, “What does it mean to ‘get’ Tamakwa?” Although rarely put into words, getting Tamakwa is something Tamakwans all

feel deep inside, even without consciously knowing or even thinking about it.

‘Getting’ Tamakwa dates all the way back to its founding in 1936 by Unca Lou and Omer Stringer. Their goal was to create a wilderness experience where children of all ages would not only

learn about the outdoors, but also about themselves and others. At the core of Tamakwa is canoe tripping – heading out away from the comforts of home to the wild with lions, tigers and bears. Well, not really – no lions, no tigers but yes, occasionally, bears.

Tripping teaches us to

face daunting challenges that once overcome, give each of us a greater sense of self and self-esteem. Sometimes it’s individually and sometimes it’s the group.

‘Getting Tamakwa’ is also about the group. This may be your cabin group, section, boys or girls side of camp, staff groups and camp as a whole. Often these groups compete with each other, such as in different races, activities or Colour War.

We all learn to compete against each other to the best of our abilities while understanding we may not always win. Unca Lou understood this and fostered a philosophy that once this hard fought competition is over, we are all still members of our group and we are all one, Tamakwans.

As much as the wilderness experience is at the heart of ‘getting Tamakwa,’ it’s really the interaction between Tamakwans that is paramount. Unca Lou always felt that campers of all ages could and should be friends. Although someone is 17, it doesn’t mean he/she can’t have a friend who is seven. Age

wasn’t important – indeed, in Tamakwa’s inaugural year, there was at least one 4-year-old at camp – but character was. It became incumbent upon each and every Tamakwan to help each other become their best, at whatever. In fact, just being called a Tamakwan, or identifying as such, confirms the notion of belonging to something very special.

Finally, there is the vibe of just going to and being at camp. Although it’s a long drive from Michigan, I’ve always looked forward to it. As I pass each leg of the trip from the border to London, Toronto, Barrie and Huntsville, I feel a sense of both calmness and excitement.

My heart beats faster as I approach Algonquin Park. I feel like I’m almost home as I pass the West Gate and finally glimpse camp across the lake from the highway. Nothing in the world compares to rounding the bend and seeing my home for however long or short my time will be there.

Tamakwa, some get it and some don’t. I get it and hope you do, too!

YOU EITHER GET IT OR YOU DON'T

Insightful words about camp by a veteran Tamakwan receive renewed attention this past summer. BY MAX NORRIS

In a speech celebrating one of Vic Norris’ many milestones at camp, (full disclosure: Vic is my father), long-time Tamakwan Ron Sherman once famously stated, “When it comes to Tamakwa, you either get it, or you don’t.”

While doing little to debunk the rumours of Tamakwa being a cult, this sentence experienced a revival at camp this past summer. On its surface, these words are fairly self-explanatory. However, for those reading this who may need some additional assistance, I’ve included a detailed explanation below:

In borrowing Ron’s expression “you either get it or you don’t,” the “it” refers to Tamakwa and “you” denotes anyone who understands, or fails to understand, the essence of Camp Tamakwa.

The sentence is a vague and binary filter which separates the purists from the tourists, the seasonal and spiritual inhabitants of camp from its visitors and pretenders. While Tamakwans have come to appreciate this expression’s blunt and direct message, “it” remains largely undefined. Yes, “you either get it, or you don’t” but what is “it” exactly? What about

Tamakwa do you have to understand in order to get “it”?

Luckily for us, an 88-year scientific research study, initially commissioned by camp co-founders Lou and Omer, appears to finally give us an answer to this question. After interviewing thousands of Tamakwa-affiliated individuals, the results of the study show that only a few characteristics separate those who get “it” from those who don’t. While small in number, the following characteristics are vital and essential attributes of people who do indeed get “it.”

- **A recognition of Tamakwa’s rich history and reverence for its builders.** Those who get “it” have a deep admiration of camp’s treasured past and unwavering respect for the people who’ve dedicated their lives, both past and present, to maintaining and improving Tamakwa’s condition through the years. They wander aimlessly through the Dining Hall late into the night, perpetually in awe of the constellation of plaques and memories spanning the full history of camp. They are fueled by tradition and have an insatiable



appetite for camp schtick.

- **An appreciation of Tamakwa’s setting.** People who get “it” are cognizant of Algonquin Park’s timeless beauty and camp’s

modest place within it. They cherish its serenity: the clean air, the calmness of the lake and the crystal clear night skies.

- **An understanding of**

Tamakwa’s purpose. Camp is for the kids. While increasingly cliché to say, Tamakwa is indeed more important now than ever given the conditions of today’s world. It exists to provide an escape for its campers. The people who get “it” understand this. They understand camp’s vital role as a still and persistent fixture within our increasingly complex, ever changing and fast-paced lives.

While these three attributes are crucial components to the puzzle, they are merely prerequisites for getting “it.” There are many people who appreciate camp’s history, setting, and purpose and yet still fail to get “it.”

You see, the people who get “it,” who fully understand Tamakwa, all have something else much more important in common. Either consciously or subconsciously, actively or passively, they live by a set of values. They share a certain mindset, a unique perspective on life itself: a belief in genuine human connection, the necessity of laughter, the importance of embracing the present, connecting with their surroundings, and being unapologetically themselves.

These ideals are the key to unlocking the true essence of Tamakwa. Anybody, from any walk of life, who shares this same set of values is able to get “it.” It’s the reason why someone coming from halfway across the world, rounding the bend for the first time, is able to fit in at camp so quickly and effortlessly.

Individually we may not always live up to these values. We may lose perspective from time to time. It’s impossible for every day to be a perfectly golden day. However, the people who get “it” are always grounded and rooted by these principles.

These truths form the Tamakwa spirit – the common and everlasting thread through camp’s past, present, and future. Throughout the past nine decades, every Tamakwan has infused a piece of their own self into this collective spirit and it’s our responsibility to ensure that this spirit is maintained and nurtured for generations to come.

So yes, “you either get it, or you don’t” and there’s no in between. If it’s good enough for the people who do truly get “it,” then it’s more than good enough for me.

THIS JUST IN, FROM GEORGE HIRSCH

No matter where he is in the world, the venerable, much-loved former Tamakwan stays in touch with camp the old-fashioned way. BY ROBERT SARNER

This summer, in keeping with what is by now a hal- lowed tradition at Tamakwa, George Hirsch con- tinued to make his presence felt at camp through a once popular form of communication now largely forgot- ten in the outside world. Telegrams from George from far-flung locations around the world addressed to Tam- akwans were read out to campers and staff assembled on the Slope several times during first and second session. The last telegram culminated with George making his promised annual visit to camp, dressed in his trademark jacket and tie while water-skiing on South Tea Lake, passing by the Slope before vanishing into the horizon for another year.

Few people at camp realize George is a real person and former Tamakwan. He was a camper and staffer in the late 1940s and early 50s, who went on to a successful career as a magazine publisher in the US. For decades now, a different staff member takes on the reading of George’s telegrams to campers gathered on the Slope, as part of one of the longest-lasting schticks at camp. Add- ing to the experience, the crowd screams out “Stop!” in unison at the end of each sentence in true telegram style.

Laden with puns, the telegrams refer to places he’s visited on his extended travels as George works his way to Tamakwa on his yearly pilgrimage by way of his usual mode of transportation – water-skiing.

“My favourite thing about the tradition of George Hirsch is that it goes to show that tradition can beat out current technology,” says Jake Godfrey, who has often read out George’s telegrams at camp in recent years. “While 99% of campers and even staff have no idea what a telegram is, they all chime in and yell ‘stop’ after each line. That’s really special. It goes to show that despite our constantly growing and changing world, we as a people still remain grounded with our traditions, which is what camp is all about.”

Here’s a selection of the telegrams George sent to Tamakwa this past summer, in the order which they were received and shared with campers and staff, followed by the most recent telegram George sent to the Toronto of- fice in early October:

.....
RECEIVED JULY 7, 2023

Greetings Tamakwans – **STOP**

I hope your summer is going great with many golden days – **STOP**

Before making my way toward camp, I had to go to New Zealand to attend some business meetings. I can’t wait to get back on my water skis. It’s become hobbitual for me – **STOP**

Sadly, while in Auckland, I rolled my ankle and had to use a Kaine. –**STOP**

After my stay in New Zealand, I headed to Australia, as my family has some history there. I was especially excited to see where my aunt Mel was bourne. – **STOP**

I made a good friend while I was in Australia. His name was Taz but he started acting crazy. I asked other locals what was going on with him, and they said, “Don’t worry, that’s just Tasmania. – **STOP**

I was playing rugby in Perth and the ball fell into someone’s yard. We knocked on the door and the owner said it was Outback. – **STOP**

I went snorkelling while I was in Australia, when sud- denly I noticed a large herd of sea cows blocking my way. It was the great barrier beef. – **STOP**

After my stay in Australia, I travelled north to get away from Australia’s desert heat. The first place I stopped had a pet shop in the harbour. I walked in and heard a child say, “Papa, a new guinea pig!” – **STOP**

I went to a meeting on a tropical island. Boy, was it a bora bora. – **STOP**

I’m getting closer and closer to Tamakwa as we speak. I’m getting Fiji-ety just thinking about it – **STOP**

Hopefully, I will see you all soon!

Signed,
George Hirsch

.....
RECEIVED JULY 22, 2023

Hello again Tamakwans, – **STOP**

I can’t believe that you are already in second session! – **STOP**

I recently went to Turkey because I heard of their fan- tastic markets. However, upon my arrival, I found them to be quite bazaar. – **STOP**

After Turkey, I went to Greece because of one of my favourite movies. Imagine my surprise when I couldn’t find John Travolta anywhere – **STOP**

I went to Serbia to see my favourite athlete, Nikola Djokic. It started out as a fun visit, but it quickly turned pretty sombor. – **STOP**



Afterwards, I went to the Budapest zoo to see the hippos. I was quite distraught when I arrived to see that they were starving. They were some hungry Hungary hippos – **STOP**

I was rushing through my stay in Austria, but then I had to remind myself, “Slow down you crazy child, Vienna waits for you.” – **STOP**

As I was water skiing through the canals of Venice, I was unfortunately hit by a boat. The driver was very apologetic and offered his gondolances. – **STOP**

Afterwards, I went to the south of France, it was Nice. – **STOP**

My trip to Germany took much longer than expected. When I got there, I realized I hadn’t showered in days. I was in desperate need to buy some nice Cologne. – **STOP**

I visited Norway and I loved it so much that I wanted to buy a vacation home. I was quite disappointed when I found out that I couldn’t a-fjord it. – **STOP**

Then, I went to England to settle a dispute between two rival companies. I told them to just bury the Leeds. – **STOP**

Hopefully, I’ll see you all soon!

Signed,
George Hirsch

.....
RECEIVED AUG. 1, 2023

Hello again Tamakwans, – **STOP**

I’m almost at Tamakwa and I can’t wait to see you all soon. – **STOP**

I was craving a bit of warmth so I went to the Carib- bean. When I was there I had a run-in with a guy that was a real Jerk, he was Jamaican me crazy! – **STOP**

My next stop was in Cuba to go to my nephew’s Bar Mitzvah. We danced all night singing Havana Gila. – **STOP**

Next, I went to Orlando, Florida because I was really excited to go to SeaWorld, but when I was there I com- pletely failed to see the porpoise. – **STOP**

My last stop was in New York. When I was there, I went to Buffalo and saw families getting ready to send their kids to Tamakwa. One dad hugged his kid and said, bye-son. – **STOP**

Hopefully, I will see you all soon!

Signed,
George Hirsch

.....
RECEIVED AUG. 11, 2023

Hello again Tamakwans, – **STOP**

I’ve finally reached Algonquin Park and am getting close to the shores. – **STOP**

I entered Algonquin from the east side, but I didn’t run into anyone for miles. It was very Barron. – **STOP**

There was one really long lake that took me ages to ski across. However, it was quite beautiful and I really enjoyed myself. It was a Grand ol’ time. – **STOP**

I then had to do a series of ridiculous portages with my skis. That was one Hell Day. – **STOP**

On that day, I stopped for lunch on Loonskin Lake,

but there were a lot of weird things happening and I got spooked. However that lake did have a lot of cult-ture. – **STOP**

On White Partridge, I took a rest. I know I need to get to camp, but I just had to... – **STOP**

When I stayed on Lavielle, I got rained out on my site and a nice man helped me find shelter. He was a real algae. – **STOP**

On the next lake, I walked up to the crow’s nest to see if I could spot Tamakwa.

Unfortunately, something was blocking my view. Man, that was one Big Crow. – **STOP**

At my next stop, I happened to witness a beautiful wedding. Watching the father walk with his daughter made me feel incredibly overjoyed. That was one Happy Isle. – **STOP**

On the lake over, I finally got some cell service and found out some terrible news that all of my businesses had been embargoed! All my bridges had been Burnt! – **STOP**

I had plans to spend the night near camp, but those plans went up in Smoke. – **STOP**

I’m going to round the bend any minute now!
Signed,
George Hirsch

.....
RECEIVED OCT. 12, 2023

Greetings Tamakwans! – **STOP**

I hope you’re all enjoying the offseason. – **STOP**

It was so nice to see all of you on my annual ski by camp this summer, but with the seasons changing I’m just happy I didn’t fall. – **STOP**

My first stop on my 11-month business trip was Thunder Bay. I was a bit nervous, as I’m not a fan of rainstorms, but to my surprise, the weather was quite nice! – **STOP**

I have an old business partner who wanted to meet me for coffee in Portland. Upon arriving there, my suit was tattered from an arduous journey by the Oregon Trail. Luckily, I was wearing my Trailblazer, so I still had something to change into. – **STOP**

I called my business partner to tell him I’ve arrived at Main St., Portland, Oregon. Imagine my disappointment when he told me he meant Portland, Maine. – **STOP**

As I didn’t have time to turn back, I began making my way towards Hawaii. I desperately wanted to avoid the incoming cold weather, and thus had no time to – **STOP**

Once I arrived in Maui, I realized I was rather hun- gry, so I asked a local where the best places to eat are. They said “What are you in the mood for? Could you be more Pacific?” – **STOP**

I stopped by the Island of Hawaii because I had always wanted to see Mauna Loa, the world’s largest volcano. I had a blast! – **STOP**

I can’t wait to see you all next summer!

Signed,
George Hirsch



WHEN TAMAKWA ALUMNI COME TOGETHER

A cross-generational mix of Tamakwans converge on hallowed ground for a weekend of friendship, nostalgia and adventure. BY PIERS GIFFIN

In late August, a large group of adult Tamakwans from across Canada and the United States, spanning several generations, made a pil-

grimage back to the sunny shores of Tamakwa for this year's Alumni Camp. Over the course of several days, they relived cherished memories, reconnected

with old friends and made new memories.

The weekend was a vibrant mix of nostalgia and adventure, with attendees ranging in age from their

20s to their 80s. Activities kicked off with a classic Tamakwa Schmooze and a BBQ dinner. As the night went on, alumni enjoyed campfires, songs, and storytelling reminiscent of their summers spent by the shores of South Tea Lake.

One of the highlights of the Alumni Camp is the opportunity for former campers and staff to reconnect with old friends and make new ones. Lifelong friendships forged at Tamakwa are well known to stand the test of time, and alumni camp was the perfect occasion to renew those bonds.

Tamakwa's pristine wilderness setting provides the ideal backdrop for alumni to rekindle their love for the outdoors. Canoeing, sailing, windsurfing, hiking and many other classic Tamakwa activities gave attendees a taste of the natural beauty that first drew them there as campers and staff.

As the weekend came to a close, the sense of community, shared memories and the inclusive spirit of Tamakwa continued to resonate with the alumni. Many departed with a renewed sense of preserving the camp's legacy and fostering a love for the outdoors. Alumni Camp was a heartwarming reminder of the enduring impact of



the Tamakwa experience to create lasting bonds. It reaffirmed the timeless beauty and "old Tamakwa spirit", leaving alumni,

much like current campers and staff, counting down the days until they can return to their beloved Sunny Shores once more.



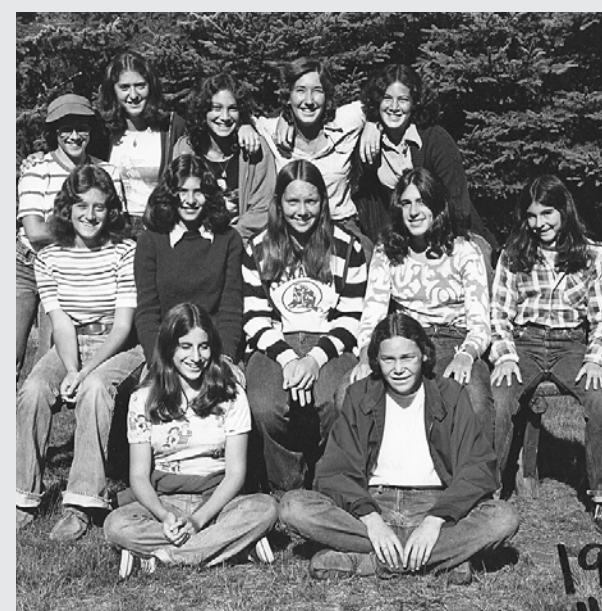
DEJA VU?

Recognize any of these people from your distant past? If so, help us place a face.

Nothing like a time-honoured group photo to trigger distant memories of former Tamakwans, some better remembered than others. Indeed, who are they? Can you name any of them? Perhaps you're actually one of them. Here's a hint: these two cabin pictures, one of Voyager campers, the other of 49ers, date back to 1976. Where have the years gone?

Help us identify the campers and staffers in these vintage photos for the next issue of the *South Tea Echo*. We want names. We'd especially like to hear from anyone who recognizes himself or herself in these two distinguished groups. If you appear in the photos, please share with us your recollections about your fellow cabin mates and other Tamakwans along with any related anecdotes.

• Please send your response to echo@tamakwa.com



THE BEST OF TAMAKWA

FROM COVER TO COVER

The *South Tea Echo* presents Tamakwa like you won't find it anywhere else. Since 2002, it has been capturing the best of Tamakwa life through an engaging mix of words and photos. Highly informative and entertaining, each issue showcases the summer's greatest moments as seen by campers and staff.



Find every issue of the *South Tea Echo* at www.tamakwa.com. Click on "Alumni," go to "Archive."

THE SOUTH TEA ECHO
Telling the Tamakwa story since 2002

QUOTE UNQUOTE

Random words of wisdom expressed at camp, as captured for posterity.

BY NATE OKOROFKY AND HUNTER RISEN

ABBY GREENSPAN, 15, CIT, Toronto, ON, 7th year at camp
"Why stress about the inevitable?"

ZAC SCOTT, 21, Senior Counselor, Perth, Australia, 2nd year
"Live, laugh and love, and you won't go wrong, I promise you."

JASON SEQUEIRA, 21, Head of Transportation, Toron-

to, ON, 2nd year
"It's always sunny on the beautiful shores of South Tea Lake."

EVE CAMPION-DYE, 22, Arts and Crafts Activity Leader, Bath, UK, 1st year
"Get it!"

JASMINE PARKER, 16, CIT, Bloomfield Hills, MI, 6th year
"Don't ask permission, ask for forgiveness."

MATTHEW SHIELDS, 12, Voyager, Toronto, ON, 5th year
"Life is long but time is short. That's the way it seems to be at Tamakwa too"

CHARLOTTE KARN, 23, Pioneer Section Head, Toronto, ON, 6th year
"Every time you do something out of your comfort zone, you'll find that it gets bigger."

THE TUFF BEAVERS COME TO PLAY

Tamakwans show their real colours in two Intercamp days, against Manitou and Tamarack. BY BRAD ZOUSER

Another year, another fantastic summer at Landsports at Tamakwa. Between the ballfield, half-court, volleyball and the Plat-Forum, Tamakwans demonstrated their athletic prowess. Among the top highlights were unquestionably both Intercamp days – first-session against Camp Manitou and several weeks later when Camp Tamarack visited the Sunny Shores. Camper and staff participation was at its best as that ol’ Tamakwa spirit prevailed.

On July 8, first-month intercamp began strong with a resounding 12U boys basketball win, led by Isaac Turner’s 3-point barrage. In volleyball, Senior Girls and first-year 49ers made their presence known on the court as Tamakwa fought hard but ultimately took a close loss.

Later in the day, the softball team defeated Manitou 15-2 behind the strong play of the Senior Boys and CIT Boys. The game was called due to the mercy rule in only the fifth inning. On the Plat-Forum, Tamakwa brought the heat. 16U basketball may have been the best game of the

day. After a slow start to the game, CIT Andy Storm hit three crucial three-pointers to take the lead. After a Manitou layup, Eddie Segal, known for his clutch shots, hit the game-winning jump shot and Cameron Arviv made two clutch free-throws to give the Beavers the win.

After the game, Storm said, “My shots hadn’t been falling in the TBL (Tamakwa Basketball League), but I knew our team had to find some offense from somewhere, and I wanted



to be that guy!”

Next, 16U girls basketball and hockey took the court, playing side-by-side in front of the whole camp. Senior Girl Devin Hillman



led the upstart basketball team in a hard-fought game against a taller Manitou squad. Across the Plat-Forum, the 16U hockey team played an extremely tough game, but unfortunately lost against Manitou. It was amazing watching the whole camp come together to support our athletes on a beautiful July golden day.

Exactly one month later, on slightly less of a golden day on August 8, Tamarack came to Tamakwa for the second-session Intercamp. After experiencing some liquid sunshine in the morning, campers and staff were determined to play, wiping down courts all over camp. “We all wanted the

campers to experience a real day of Intercamp,” Senior Counselor Ethan Purther explained. “With the Northland Basketball Tournament and other Intercamp competitions canceled, it was important to us staff members for the kids to play, and we weren’t going to be stopped by the rain.”

The day opened with one of the most dominant victories I’ve seen in my 12 years at Tamakwa – a 16U girls handball smackdown against Tamarack. Senior Girl Kate Rames led the way, with seven goals.

Soon after, the 16U girls volleyball team avenged their first-session loss with a resounding three-set win. Despite a

slow start, Justin Giddens’s 16U softball team had a six-run fourth inning, leading them to a strong win. After a long day of drying and cleaning, the Plat-Forum surface was ready to go for hockey, 16U boys basketball and the highly-anticipated staff basketball game.

While coming up just short a month earlier, the 16U hockey team rallied around Coach Jacob Ellenbogen for an impressive 11-4 victory, behind stellar play from Jacob Hersen and Ben Yosowitz.

“I’m really proud of the determination the team put in this summer,” says Coach Ellenbogen. “They worked hard and always had a smile on their faces.

In 16U boys basketball, when the Beavers put in a slow start, the coaches called a timeout and adjusted the offense. It proved an auspicious move, prompting a three-point barrage from Ben Cooper, Nathan Marcus, Cameron Arviv, Chase Rosenzweig and the rest of the team, leading them to a blowout 72-38 victory.

Finally, the highly-anticipated staff basketball

team took the court against Tamarack’s staff, winning 79-45, led by the starting five of Ross and Seth Hysni, Ethan Purther, Zac Scott and yours truly, as well as elite bench contributions from Ainsley Stott and Chloe Siskind.

When all was said and done, Tamakwa ended the day triumphantly, sweeping Tamarack in Intercamp competition for the first time in many years. In both sessions, the Tuff Beavers played hard, had fun and demonstrated great enthusiasm and typical Tamakwa positive attitude which the entire camp appreciated. It bodes well for next summer’s Intercamp contests.



HOOPS SUPREMACY AT STAKE

Action was intense during the 2023 season of the Tamakwa Basketball League as six teams sought to dominate the paint. BY AINSLEY STOTT

This summer, the Tamakwa Basketball League returned to the sunny shores of South Tea, following its highly successful campaign in 2022. For my part, I stepped down from my coaching position to focus on being the TBL Commissioner to make the tournament more competitive after my team’s stellar performance in the finals last year.

The regular season consisted of teams playing each other four times. With many of the players and coaches having to go on trip during the summer, this meant the team with the most togetherness, depth and heart would be the most successful.

After the first round of games, Stacey’s Boys asserted their dominance with star player Chase Rosenzweig looking unguardable. The Gardners also made a convincing start with Hutz Fuzz and the Herb Destroyers struggling to pick up wins.

At the midway point, due to Stacey’s Boys’s domination and many teams trying to find a consistent winning formula, the front office of many teams went to work, making trades. This led to huge shift in



performances as some newly configured rosters began to gel and display consistency. Stacey’s Boys continued to dominate the league but suffered a shock defeat to bottom feeder Herb Destroyers near the end of the regular season.

Hutz Fuzz found a new lease on life, changing their starting three to two bigs in Jonah Wittenberg and Lewis Pancer and Dylan Perlis at guard, which took them on a 7-2 run and left them second in the table at the end of the season.

C-Block reunited last year’s TBL juggernauts Cam Arviv and Nathan Marcus. Although they didn’t find the same form this season, they finished a respectable third place, tied with Hutz Fuzz but losing on Head 2 Head.

The Gardners began to tank, hard pressed to

pick up wins. However in a grudge match between the recently traded vets Eddie Segal (The Gardners) and Jake Diner (Herb Destroyers), The Gardners won,



providing them with high hopes for the play-in.

The Herb Destroyers had difficulty holding on to leads during the season, picking up only two wins, one of which was against Stacey’s Boys which gave them an anything-can-happen narrative in the play-in.

After surprising twists and turns in the play-in and playoffs, two teams that had earlier in the summer seemed unlikely contenders for the championship, made it to the finals. With Herb Destroyers and Hutz Fuzz both

having had rocky starts to the season and being heavy underdogs, Tamakwans knew that this would be a game for the ages.

It featured previous TBL Champs in Ben Cooper and Max Zamir and other players who had a point to prove after falling short last year. The front offices of both teams deserve credit for having turned their seasons around and finding the winning formula.

Herb Destroyers started the final with ice in their veins, taking a 9-0 lead. After an early timeout and some wise words from coaches Seth Hysni and Brody Lutz, Hutz Fuzz began to play. The Destroyers took a 9-point lead into the second half. I’m not sure what words were shared between the Hutz Fuzz coaches and players but the team returned to the court rejuvenated.

Jonah Wittenberg turned into a combination of Shaq and Jokic, dominating the paint and picking dims. Dylan Perlis played the game of his life, leaving Steph Curry taking notes. Lewis Pancer looked like a young Scottie Pippen. After plenty of rebounds and assists from Witt, a handful of lay ups

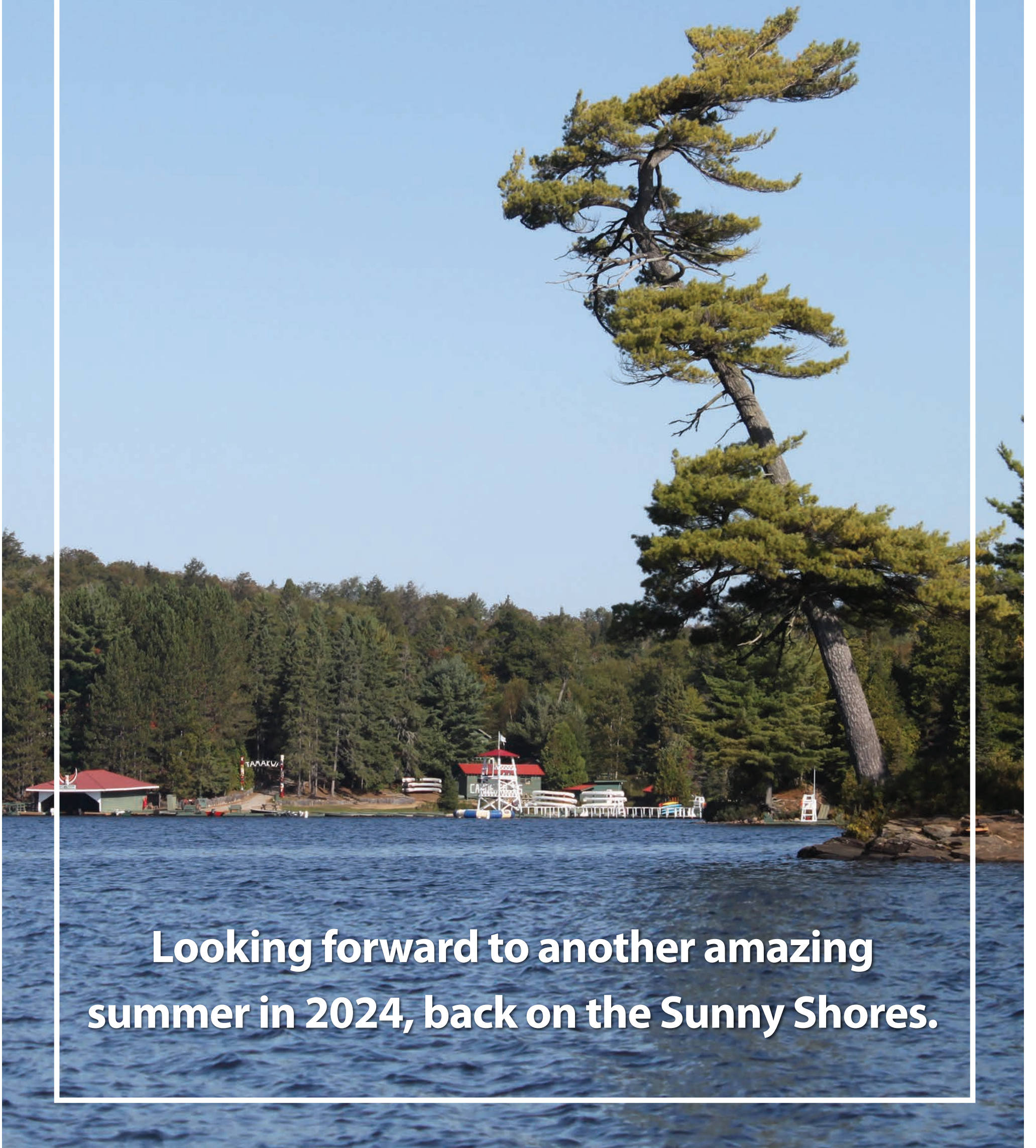


and boards from Pancer and Perlis sinking threes, the game turned on its head and Hutz Fuzz began to take an unassailable lead, ultimately winning the game 37-22, becoming 2023 TBL champions.

As for end-of-season individual awards, Chase Rosenzweig was declared MVP, while Dylan Perlis captured the Finals MVP honours. Jake Gorodistian was Rookie of the Year; Ben Cooper the 4th Man of the Year; Jonah Wittenberg the Most Improved Player, while Quinn Nathans was named The Missing Piece. Seth Hysni and Brody Lutz won the Coaches of the Year award.

TAMAKWA

Up in Algonquin



Looking forward to another amazing summer in 2024, back on the Sunny Shores.