

"People Experiencing People in God's Nature"

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St. John Bosco Camp Association, Fall 2008



The Bosca Wilderness

The Newsletter of the St. John Bosco Camp Association

LEAD STORY HEADLINE

This has been a truly historic year for Camp. We chose as our theme "The Spirit Lives On" as we celebrated our 50th Anniversary. It was also a tremendously busy and successful year for those associated with camp.

With Saskatchewan's recent booming economy our province needs St. John Bosco Camp and its myriad of leadership and adventure activities perhaps more than ever before. Jobs may attract people to Saskatchewan but the opportunities offered to them when they arrive are what makes them want to call our

province "home". What they are offered is established and recognized universities and technical schools, competitive sports teams and athletic programs, exciting festivals throughout the year in cities and smaller communities alike. The list goes on with activities like drama, art, outdoor activities and much more.

St. John Bosco Camp plays a role in this terrific province, offering its unique wilderness experiences to our residents and others from across Canada and around the world who choose to enroll in our programs.

COOL SPRING PROGRAMS

This year we had 504 students and chaperones from 15 elementary schools at camp in our spring programs. Spring camp took place between May 27th and June 20th. As in the past, the school groups stayed for either 3 or 4 days. While there, our staff introduced the students to most activities they would experience in our summer programs, although their time in each activity was obviously shorter than in the summer. We had very positive feedback from teachers and campers.

HOT SUMMER PROGRAMS

Our summer programs are for youth between the ages of 9 and 17. We had 209 campers in our summer programs this year. Summer programs included three 10 day camps in July and August as well as our 24 day ALE program. We have a choice of programs, all of which are age appropriate, offering challenges and success to participants. It is always rewarding to hear from our newest campers and to find out what they thought about their camping experience.

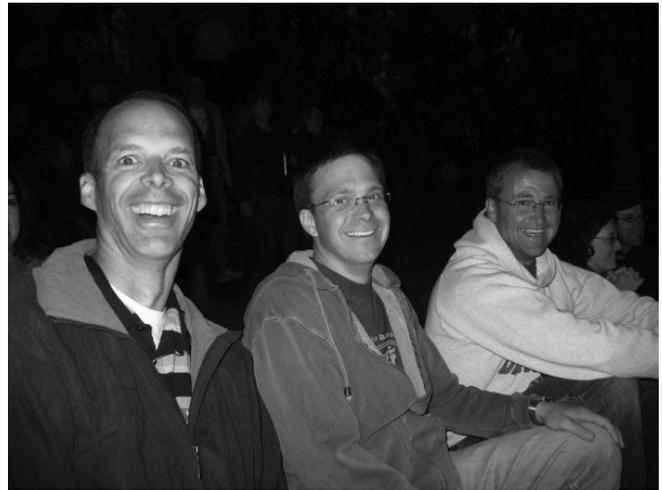
"The thing I liked most about BOSCO was the counsellors, rhymes, spooky stories and the songs. It was so much fun, especially canoe wars. That was my favourite game - so was Wide Game of Flags. Now that was fun! My counsellors were so funny and cool. I loved it so much that I would go back there until I am in ALE to become a staff member." - New camper, Summer 2008

OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND: AUGUST 1 - 4, 2008

One of the most rewarding experiences for us this year was to play host on the August long weekend to approximately 210 alumni from 7 provinces and territories as well as France and England. 14 of this year's staff also volunteered their time to help co-ordinate activities and meals. It was such a pleasure for the organizing committee to hear from you as you planned your visits and then to meet you when you arrived. Alumni from every decade since the camp's beginning attended. Thank you to everyone who came and shared 50 years of tremendous memories with us and with each other. It was a great opportunity for many people to get reacquainted.

One of our guests was heard to say that the chapel, campfires and the dining hall were his 3 favourite places when he was a young camper as those were the places everyone got together. For him our 50th Anniversary brought back many fond memories and we have several people to single out for thanks. We wish to especially thank Bishop Albert LeGatt who celebrated mass on Sunday and who reminded us that God's presence can be truly felt in pristine wilderness. He along with Father Ken Thorsen, O.M.I., who lead Saturday's liturgy as well as Michel Thibeault who lead Friday's liturgy made our chapel a special place this weekend. Thanks as well to Dave Godwin who lead Saturday night's campfire activities and all those who played along. They made campfire special. Finally thank you to Esther and Jerry Pidskalny who volunteered to cook and served a delicious meal for us on Saturday night. They, along with our staff who volunteered to stay and help, made the dining hall a special place. As this year's theme says, "The Spirit Lives On."

Our 50th was also a time to reflect on our Camp's origins. Lawrence (Larry) Salamon of Tisdale was unable to attend the reunion but took the time to write us a short account of our Camp's first years. Most of his letter was read out to those assembled at supper on Saturday. Larry wrote that he believes the



Peter Kahlert, Father Ken Thorsen, and Dennis Mercer share some memories.

idea for a camp originated with Father Desmond, O.S.M., pastor of Nipawin. He enlisted the help of Bob Brunnel and John LeBlanc and they discussed building at Zeden on the Hanson Lake Road which was just a mud trail through the bush at the time. People from Zeden and Nipawin met on a Saturday or Sunday morning at Zeden at the public beach and they walked around the lake and decided to build on the bluff where the kitchen is now located. John LeBlanc blazed a trail from the road to the camp site with the help of others. Over the winter the Knights of Columbus from various Northeast Councils met and fund raised for the early construction and they went into debt to build the kitchen and mess hall. All work was done with volunteer labour. Larry describes how they never left Tisdale with fewer than 6 men in the car as they were needed to push the car out when they got stuck in the mud "and we always did get stuck once or twice." Thanks to Larry for sending us his letter and sharing his memories.



Bishop LeGatt and the choir.



Representatives of the 1980's!

OTHER 2008 HIGHLIGHTS

Roofing Repairs: We hired a roofer from Melfort to put a metal roof on our Quonset. It has been leaking for several years and we finally had the financial means to pay for this to be done in 2008. We also put a metal roof with 4 skylights onto our Naturelore Building. This roof was also leaking. We were able to keep costs down on the Naturelore roof as 3 board members and Alfred Labreque did the work on a volunteer basis while Gary Newton gave us the free use of equipment and tools. We are very grateful to The Lorne and Evelyn Johnson Foundation for their continued financial support which, this year, helped cover the costs of these roofs.

Staff Quarters: We began expansion and renovations of the staff quarters in the fall of 2006. The staff moved into the expansion this year. Vince Seaborn of Saskatoon volunteered his time to stucco the staff quarters this fall after staff closed. He was assisted by several staff and board members. Thank you Vince and the Seaborn family for all you have done for camp for the past years.

Truck: We purchased a 1992 GMC Sierra 3/4 ton with very low mileage from the University of Saskatchewan in June. Vince Seaborn was also instrumental in finding this truck for us and the University sold it to us a very good price. Our 2 old trucks which have served us well over the years have been sold.

OUR AWESOME STAFF

What a wonderful and dynamic staff we had this year! Our Camp Director was a long time member of the Bosco family, Eric Pulvermacher. Jesse Roy was our able and dedicated Assistant Director. Former staff returned and brought with them our camp traditions to keep them alive and well for 2008. They were joined by others new to staff and to camp but who soon felt right at home. The Board once again thanks all staff who helped make camp such a great experience for our campers.

In part because of the competitive job market in Saskatchewan, we were late in hiring a Director and Assistant Director this spring. We are attempting to remedy that for 2009. We would like to choose a Director in November of 2008 and have that person actively involved with the Board and recruiting staff early in 2009. **If you know of a mature individual 21 years of age or older who has a spirit of adventure, leadership qualities and who may be interested in the Director's or Assistant Director's position please have that person contact our office soon.**



One of the 2008 ALE groups hits the trail.



The new Quonset roof.

THE FUTURE!

We hope to keep camp on a solid footing for the next 50 years.

We are already getting prepared for 2009. Mark your calendar for our **Annual General Meeting on November 23, 2008** in Saskatoon. Details are enclosed. There are numerous vacancies on our Board of Directors. If you wish to be involved in the camps future direction, consider joining the board.

Also, consider joining us for our **work weekend on the May long weekend in 2009 (May 16 - 18)**. We will provide free food and shelter. You will provide spirit and elbow grease to help open camp. It is always fun!

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS, DONORS AND GRANTING AGENCIES

We are a non-profit corporation and a registered charity. Camper fees do not come close to covering the cost of operating camp. Therefore we rely on volunteer labour, grants and donations to help us offer our unique wilderness experience at a reasonable cost. If you are interested in making a monetary donation or volunteering in any way to help at camp or with other activities throughout the year please contact us.

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING GRANTING AGENCIES

The Dakota Dunes Development Corporation • Human Resources Development Canada • The Lorne and Evelyn Johnson Foundation
The Saskatchewan Camping Association • The City of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan Lotteries

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