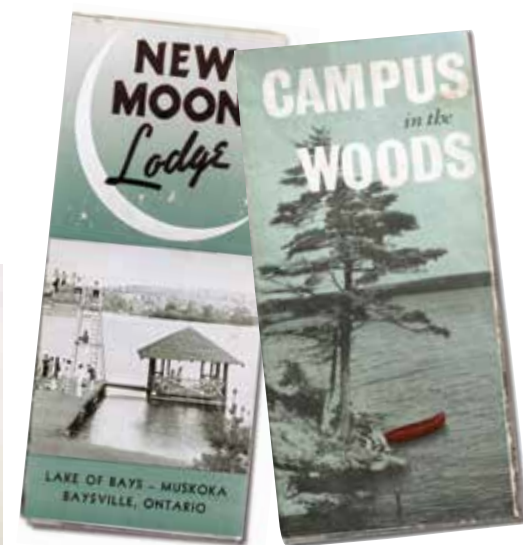




What to do with your kids when playing in the sand
with the grandparents doesn't cut it anymore.

Camps ON THE Bays

by Andrea Duncan



It was the month of August in 2010 before our family could escape to the Lake, for more than a weekend, to enjoy the last couple of weeks of summer. In previous years we had been lucky to have friends and family who had children around the same age as ours to play with during the long summer days, but I never am certain of everyone's vacation schedule. My daughter, who was just shy of five at the time, was looking for things to do when her friends and cousins weren't around—playing in the sand with the grandparents just wasn't cutting it anymore. This had me thinking: Are there camps on Lake of Bays?

Turns out there are two: Camp New Moon and Camp Arrowhead! Camp New Moon is close to Baysville on the South Branch Muskoka River and Camp Arrowhead is on Ten Mile Bay. Both host impressive waterfronts and large properties.

The brochure boasted a mix of “active recreation and quiet reflection” in the “fresh Canadian air.”

Camp New Moon was originally called New Moon Lodge in the 1930s when lodges were vogue. The Simpson family bought the lodge in 1949 and hired Bert Fine to rebuild the lodge into a working camp for children. The camp ran through the 50s, but in 1959 the Simpsons sold the camp to Al Goodman and Bert Fine.

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left: The waterfront is the gem of Camp New Moon's site. **above, left:** For more than 50 years, New Moon has been a leader in providing advanced sailing instruction. **above, right and centre:** Challenge ropes and beach volleyball are two of many activities offered to the campers. **this page above:** Brochures from the early days—Campus in the Woods promises active recreation in the fresh Canadian air, New Moon Lodge, now Camp New Moon, its brochure features the celebrated waterfront.



Since 1959, Al Goodman, and later with his son Jack, have run a traditional cabin-style children's camp that has evolved to the changing interests of the campers. While the songs at the camp fire are the same songs that have been sung by the campfire pit for over 50 years, the campers now have mountain biking, rock wall climbing, and gymnastics as choices of activities.

Jack Goodman takes pride in the inclusive nature of Camp New Moon's community; "We have second and third generation families who come" says Jack.

At the other end of our lake sits Camp Arrowhead. It first started as a camp for girls, named Camp Clovelly, in 1954. In 1972 it became Arrowhead Sailing Camp. Although Camp Arrowhead's programs continue to have sailing, the camp has grown to offer a wider variety of waterfront sports, as well as nature and craft activities.

Camp Arrowhead provides an experience that children and teens are keen to embrace year after year. The campers come back as campers and later return as leaders in training and finally counsellors.

As I researched the camps on Lake of Bays, I learned how far back the camping history goes on our waters. Those of you who have been on the lake for a long time may remember when Lake of Bays was a place to camp for large brigades of campers on long canoe trips.

For over 20 years Fairview Island was home to a camp called Campus in the Woods. I had the pleasure of speaking with Jill Langford, whose family currently owns Fairview Island, about the history of the camping life. Jill explained that Fairview Island was originally owned by the Bastedos who sold it to Cameron Peck in 1938. In 1952, Peck sold the island to the Interservice Christian Fellowship of Illinois for \$8,000. For 14 years, the island offered a camping experience to university students from the U.S.A. and Canada.

The brochure boasted a mix of "active recreation and quiet reflection" in the "fresh Canadian air." Campers were expected to contribute two hours of physical labour each day; therefore, many buildings were added to the property during this time. Some of these buildings still stand today, and Jill says that they still refer to them by name, such as the Tuck Shop or the Mess Hall.


In 1966, the island was sold to the Canadian branch of the Interservice Christian Fellowship for \$1. The camp ran sporadically after that and the island was finally sold to the Langford family in 1972.

While many of us recall memories of cottage life on Lake of Bays, there are clearly many childhood memories of camping that have been shaped and formed on our beautiful lake. In 1980, Wilbur Sutherland wrote to Dr. Langford, Jill's father, recounting his memories as a counsellor at Campus in the Woods. It was the place Sutherland met and married his wife. They had their honeymoon on the island and it was also the location of a granddaughter's wedding.

When I surfaced from my history journey, I still had to find a present day camp solution for my small charge. I was thrilled to learn that Camp Arrowhead offers a day program in addition to their residential program. With respect to my little one, I felt she was not yet ready to handle an overnight camping experience, but the notion of a day camp would work. This would allow her to try the camping experience and allow my husband and I to have a little down time at the cottage while still being north together as a family.

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When I first broached the subject with my daughter about attending day camp she seemed skeptical, but on the first morning, she was up and dressed and wearing her backpack an hour before it was time to go. When we dropped her off for that first day she looked impossibly small to be headed for such a big adventure. Although she was shy on the details of how she'd spent her days, her counsellors assured us that she had participated in swimming, sailing, doing crafts, and making new friends.

Last summer was the start of many wonderful memories for my young daughter. Although it was only five days long, she still asks when she will be returning to Camp Arrowhead. I think we'll sign up for two weeks this year. As a parent, I know she will build friendships, sporting abilities and confidence, but most of all, lasting memories. 

above: The iconic lifeguard chair sits proud over the swimming dock at Camp New Moon.