

## INAUGURAL ISSUE OF ALUMNI WIGWAM HITS NEWSSTANDS!

We welcome you to the first issue of the Alumni Wigwam, designed to inform Kawanhee alumni and friends of the Camp's and the Foundation's goings-on, people and aspirations. As this issue hit the press, we were already beginning work on the next, which is scheduled for November.

To help keep these pages interesting and up-to-date, we would love to hear from Kawanhee alumni and friends with news about their lives, reminiscences about their times at camp, names and contact information for other Kawanhees with whom you are in touch. Please e-mail us at [alumninews@kawanhee.com](mailto:alumninews@kawanhee.com)!

### AN INTERVIEW WITH PETE ST. JOHN, OUR NEW CAMP DIRECTOR

Alumni Wigwam editor, Mark Standen, caught up with Pete St. John recently to get his perspective on his camping past and his new role at Camp Kawanhee. (Editor's note: The rare photograph of Mr. St. John in a jacket and tie, below, has been authenticated.)



*Your experience with summer camp goes back to your childhood as a camper at Camp Mowglis in New Hampshire. How did you get started as a camper there? Looking back, how do you view your experience at camp?*

Camp Mowglis is a traditional boys camp which was founded in 1903, when the summer camp movement was just starting to get up steam. The founder, Mrs. Holt, wrote to Rudyard Kipling when he was living in Vermont, asking him to use the themes from his Jungle Books as a basis for the structure of her camp, hence the name. My parents enrolled me there in 1969 when I was eight, as that was the year my father took up the post of Director at Camp Onaway, a long-established girls camp- also on Newfound Lake in Hebron, NH. Mowglis' Director had been my father's English teacher at Choate back in the '40's. My involvement at Mowglis was to last for 25 years, as camper, counselor, and Assistant Director, and I continue to serve as a Mowglis trustee today.

As so many veterans of the traditional seven-week camp experience can attest, the summers I spent at camp as a camper and counselor have been one of the single most inspirational and formative aspects of my education, largely due to the strong relationships built with counselors and friends.

*How did you come to be associated with Camp Kawanhee?*

I had just arrived on the teaching staff at Mountain Valley High School in Rumford, ME, and happened to break up a fight- John Bell, also on the MVHS staff, grabbed one kid and pulled, I grabbed the other kid and pulled, and in the subsequent introductions, I learned that he had had a similar camp career to mine at Kawanhee. At that point, I was giving thought to providing the camp experience for my son Matthew, and working at a camp just down the road from home seemed an ideal way to provide him with it. I met with Walter and Jane Estabrook, and was given a post in the Campcraft department.

*So you know two summer camps very well and probably know other camps to some extent. What distinguishes Kawanhee from other camps, if anything?*

The deep loyalty that camp alumni feel for their camp is certainly a feature they all have in common and the routines that grow up around the seven-week experience seem such a natural way of life which makes perfect sense, even though

(Interview – to be continued on page 2)

these routines may differ widely from place to place. If you asked any Kawanheean, for example, whether it made sense for a group of campers to lead the camp in singing "Johnny Appleseed" at the start of lunch, even though as a musical experience it leaves much to be desired, as everybody manages a different pitch and a different tempo, and the whole effect is one of a herd of some sort of quadruped lowing in a high breeze- why, that Kawanheean's answer would be, Well, yeah, of course it makes sense.

What Kawanhee has that is unique is a great blend of productivity and laid-back-ness. This relaxed atmosphere is something the camp cultivates very deliberately. When I first arrived, somebody remarked to me that you kept waiting for everybody to stop being so nice to each other- and they don't! The productivity is achieved with the combination of the level system with the team competition: when the Team Captains make their rounds to encourage campers to pass levels to earn points for their team, it gets results.

So campers can fill their days with a great variety of fun and exciting activities in which they can make demonstrable progress every day, and they can compete in well-matched games of soccer or baseball or basketball or ping-pong, and they can also spend time just taking it easy with their friends. It's a great balance of structure and choice.

***Your roles at Kawanhee over the past 8 years have included campcraft counselor, director of the Junior Maine Guide program, and mentor to junior counselors. As Camp Director now, your relationship with the camp may change quite a bit. How do you think your day-to-day life at camp will change? Are there any challenges of your new role that you are particularly excited about? Any that you are particularly apprehensive about?***

The exciting challenge is to be a steward of an educational institution which has played such an important role for so many, to work to keep the place strong and healthy for the generations ahead.

I see my chief responsibility as representing the parents who make this all possible- to ensure that their kids are safe, productive, and happy- even (reasonably) clean. As a parent myself, I know what it is to want someone on the lookout when I'm not around. So I expect that I'll be spending a much greater part of each day getting to know the kids better, talking with the staff about how the kids are doing, and talking with parents.

The most daunting prospect is that of mastering about 200 names in the first 72 hours!

***Are there certain features of Camp Kawanhee that you feel ought to be changed during your watch as Camp Director? If so, what would some of those changes be?***

Kawanhee has gotten the formula right since 1920, which explains our constantly full enrollment and remarkable proportion of returning staff. And since it ain't broke, I don't see that anything needs fixing. But we shall keep it fine tuned!

Where so many people are stakeholders in the place- and as a non-profit, Kawanhee belongs to the people who care about it- I feel major decisions about the direction of the place need to be taken after much discussion with anyone who has a contribution to make.

That said, I wonder if those parents who drive up from Columbus and other points south need to sit through a 4+ hour award ceremony?!

***What are other features that you would be determined to preserve?***

For me, the most important aspect of Kawanhee is its emphasis on character development, and our expectation that the members of this community treat each other with dignity and respect, while conducting themselves in a manner that lives up to their full potential. And as they gaze out at those amazing sunsets across the lake, Kawanheean's can't help but acquire a deep sense of appreciation for their surroundings, and I think we need to continue to foster a sense of responsibility for that environment.

***So what is the value of a Kawanhee summer for a typical boy in the early years of the 21st century? In other words, what can camp do for a kid these days?***

Kids are under amazing pressure these days. In the constant quest to get into a good college, kids (or more, perhaps, their parents) feel compelled to get straight A's, compete at the highest levels in sports, and contribute long hours of community service. Kawanhee offers a break from that pressure. Our kids can take a deep breath, and take time to really enjoy the day. The learning is still very much present, so are the sports, so indeed is the community service, but the boys' competition is against the other team, not the other kids. There's no pretense at Kawanhee; we get to know each other too well for that. So we're all on a first name basis- Eagle lodgers alongside of our most venerable veterans on the staff- which seems actually to increase the respect with which we treat each other.

And at the same time, as our gleaming roster of alumni will show, Kawanheean's have gone on to excel at the highest levels in all walks of life, and they will consistently cite Kawanhee as one of the most important contributors to that success. The real lessons learned probably have a lot less to do with knots and first aid and levels than with the best ways to work with other people: how to collaborate, how to compete, how to build trust, how to maintain integrity.

And they have fun!

*(Interview – to be continued on page 3)*

*As an educator year-round, do youngsters ever wear you out?*

Noise, hyperactivity, bizarre biorhythms, slavish addictions to junk food and video games, peculiar and noisy eating habits, woeful ungrammaticality: what's not to like?

*Kawanheens talk about continuing camp in perpetuity, and I think we'd all agree that this is to be hoped for. From your vantage point, what are the challenges that Kawanhee faces over the next 10 years or so?*

Kawanhee's chief challenge as a young non-profit is to grow stronger in the years ahead by maintaining a full camp, with a top-flight staff and great facilities. Our program needs to be responsive to the needs of today's kids and parents (by adding a Lacrosse clinic this year, for example!). Our chief resources for recruiting new campers are the happy clients of the previous year.

A host of possible calamities lurks just over the horizon, and for Kawanhee to be able to withstand them, we need to increase our alumni involvement and participation. Alumni refer campers as only people can who have had the Kawanhee experience. Along with parents, they are a mainstay for contributions to the annual appeal, which is indispensable to the yearly operations of the camp, and I would very much like to see Kawanhee take up the long-term commitment to raise a multi-million dollar endowment. I know the effort would be successful, as the recent camp acquisitions of property across the street and across the lake will show. At that point, our kids will know for sure that there will always be a Kawanhee!

## EIGHTY-FIFTH!

Last August, days after Kawanhee's 7-week season had drawn to a successful close, the camp season began anew for the many alums and their families who rolled into camp to celebrate Kawanhee's 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The revelers represented at least three generations of the Kawanhee family and came from all parts of the U.S. and beyond. Many arrived with their Kawanhee paddles to receive the freshly-painted insignia of the 85<sup>th</sup> reunion. Tom and Paula Lutz arrived from Louisville, Kentucky with three generations of Kawanhee medals and ribbons for the Kawanhee archives, including a 1928 award for boxing!

The four-day affair included plenty of revelry and reminiscing, and no shortage of things to do. From the Thursday evening reception to the Sunday morning brunch, laughter and Kawanhee spirit filled the days. There was the war canoe race, won convincingly by the Greys, but in doubt until the Greys synchronized their strokes and prevailed in the teeth of a tough headwind.

This same gap wind made for some great sailing. And the softball game, in which everyone able to lay a bat on the ball remembered to run the bases counterclockwise! And a spirited tug-o-war, one of the few reunion activities where the increasing girth of grown-up guys actually helped the cause! And the lobster dinner, and the polar bear swims in the morning mist, and Big John Detrick, the reunion's organizer, leading a rowdy rendition of the 1970's classic "My Hat, It Has Three Corners" at Council Point.

People came from far and wide. Juan Fuster, known to his friends as "Gordo Fofu," traveled from Madrid, Spain! There were several Kawanheens from California, including Betty Frank Brassington, daughter of Raymond Frank, and her husband, Mike. Some other states represented were Florida, Nebraska, Wyoming, Washington and Louisiana.

Many thanks to Big John Detrick, who has now organized three reunions, in 1995, 2000 and 2005.

## CAMP KAWANHEE'S FIRST ANNUAL FAMILY CAMP

AUGUST 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>

In August, Camp Kawanhee will be hosting its first-ever Family Camp. This program will run from August 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, after the close of the regular camp season, for families, alumni, prospective campers and newcomers to participate in some of Kawanhee's activities in its extraordinary setting on Lake Webb. Activities will include swimming, archery, sailing, fishing in the Narrows, tennis, state-of-the-art ropes course, canoeing, arts and crafts, day hikes up Tumbledown, Bald Mountain or Center Hill, gold panning, basketball and softball. Families and individuals are able to stay one, two, three or all four nights at a reasonable cost, which includes sleeping accommodations, meals and programs.

Family Camp offers a wonderful opportunity for families, groups or individuals to enjoy a vacation in a beautiful setting. It is an ideal location and opportunity for a family reunion, or for a family considering Camp Kawanhee for their son. We have begun taking registrations, and encourage you to get yours in soon. If you have any questions or wish to request registration information, please contact **Mark and Liz Standen** at:

Camp Kawanhee, PO Box 789, Yarmouth, ME 04096

(207) 846-7741

[ckawanhee@yahoo.com](mailto:ckawanhee@yahoo.com)

## ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES

*We thought readers would enjoy the reproduction of a 1921 letter from co-founder, Raymond C. Frank to one of his new hires, George C. Hodges:*

March 24th, 1921

Dear Mr. Hodges;

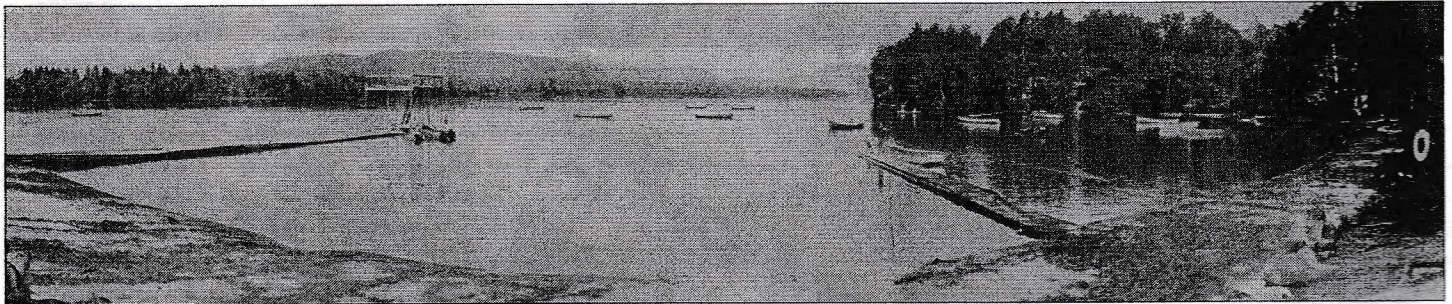
Your letter of the 18th is at hand concerning a position in our camp for this summer. There is a place open, and after making a few inquiries at the alumnae dinner last evening concerning your work at the college, I will keep the place open until I hear from you providing you care to consider it.

We are very anxious to secure some boys from Springfield for this summer and from your letter I should judge that you would be in touch with the class of people who send their boys to a private camp. Our camp is new and is limited to thirty or thirty five boys, we have no big reputation as yet and so desire to secure boys from as many places as possible. You can readily see the advisability of this.

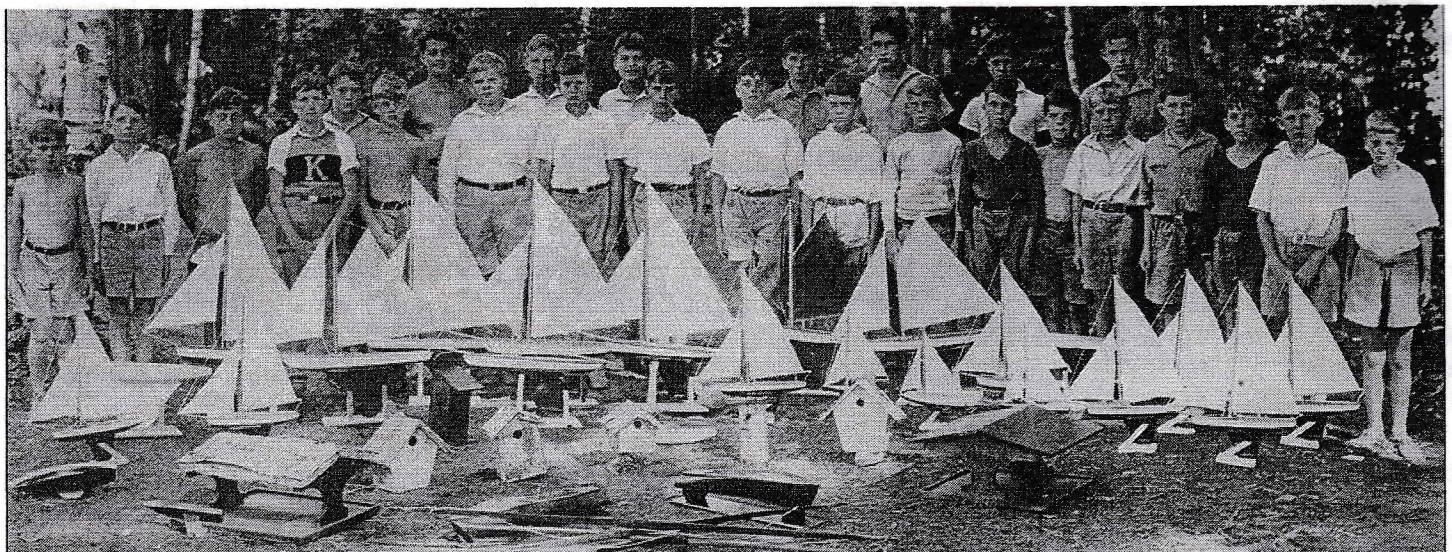
All of our councilors are coming with this understanding, that they sign up at least four boys for camp, and each one is hired as a councilor and not for one special duty. We pay your expenses from Springfield to camp and return and one hundred dollars per month or two hundred for the camp season. No leader can give his best service and be tied down to his work all the time so arrangements are made to leave camp for at least one day each week. For any boys you secure over the first four, we pay a liberal commission.

As for a camp site, ours cannot be equaled in New England and we have a fine equipment, large athletic field, tennis courts, beach, mountains, boats, etc. I would have to have a definite answer around the first of the month if possible. I hope you may see your way clear to join us.

Very cordially yours,  
Raymond C. Frank



Lakefront in the late 1920's



Display of completed Shop projects around 1930's

Many thanks to Michael S. Mathews, who sent along these photos of Junior Maine Guides accepting their awards at the State House in Augusta. Michael's recent letter to Kate Schoedinger recalled his Kawanhee past in general and the JMG award ceremony in particular:

I have tracked Camp Kawanhee through the years and was pleased to have my third son, Alex, attend for two years in the early 1990's. For various reasons my older two boys missed out on the Kawanhee experience but that is another subject. I will never forget arriving in the middle of Camp (outside the Rec Hall by the War Canoes) in 1992 to deliver Alex for his first year. Standing there for the first time in more than 30 years, someone stopped and called me by name. Soon a cluster of old friends was discussing the Maroon/Grey competition when I was Captain in 1957(?). My son and wife were quite impressed that after a long time the traditions and values seemed to be unchanged.

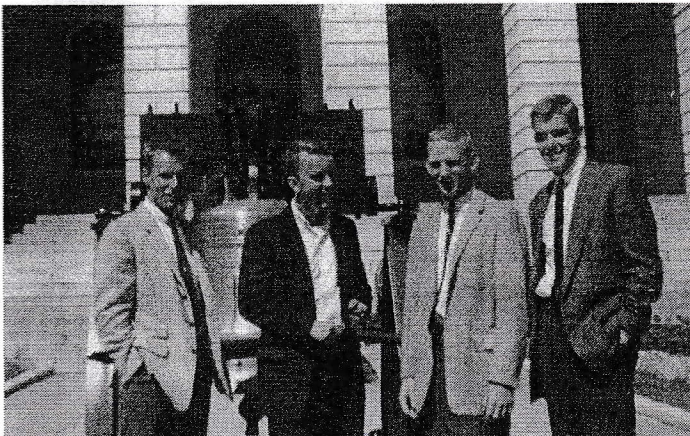
I am not certain what shape your archives are in but I enclose a picture taken in August 1956 when I was 15 years old showing me with my older brother and with Joe Shepard, both of whom were Columbus Academy, Class of 1957. The fourth person is John Pethick who was from New Jersey.

We were in Augusta to receive our Junior Maine Guide Certificates from the Governor and the award ceremony was in the State House Senate Chamber. It was a very big deal in those early years. The Governor at the time was Edmund Muskie who went on to greater fame. Although he signed our Certificates, as I recall a deputy stood for the Governor that day.

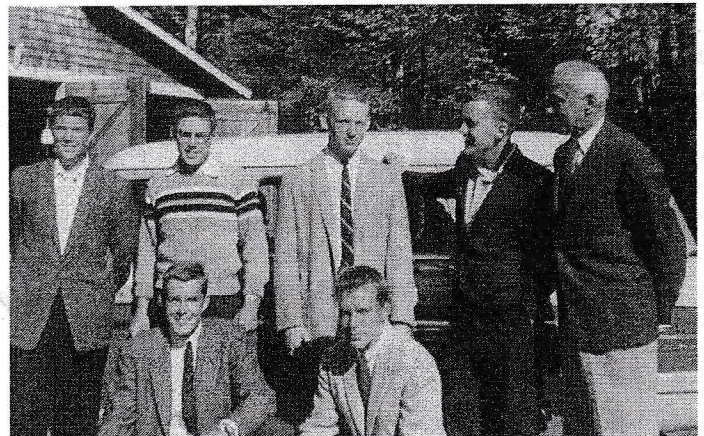
This was the second year that Camp Kawanhee had participated in the JMG program. The first year, which I also participated in but fell short by one or two tests, was in 1955 and, as I recall, only one person passed. His name was Art Downey.

And so this picture is 50 years old this summer and represents the second time Kawanhee sent representatives to the JMG encampment. The first year there were six of us who went and one passed. The second year, I think we sent two groups of six, and I guess five or six passed. I know the Program continues as the Canoe Paddle now holds the letters JMG as one of the achievements that is "paddle worthy". Perhaps if I bring my paddle back, someone can stencil JMG in the appropriate place. Yes, I still have my paddle for what it is worth.

Best Regards,  
Michael Mathews



L to R: Bob Mathews, John Pethick, Joe Shepard, Mike Mathews  
Augusta Maine - August 1956



Standing: ? , ? , Joe Shepard, John Pethick, Ross (Dean) Miller  
Kneeling: Mike Mathews, Bob Mathews  
August 1956 before going to Augusta for JMG Awards

## KAWANHEEAN DIRECTS SUMMER BLOCKBUSTER!

Bryan Singer, a Kawanhee camper for several summers in the early 1980s, was at the helm of this summer's biggest cinema event, *Superman Returns*. Bryan directed the film, which is in theatres now and playing to rave reviews from critics and moviegoers alike. He also co-directed the *X-Men* and directed *X2*. There's rampant speculation within the Kawanhee cognoscenti that early Kawanhee 8mm film efforts, including the classics *The Turnstile* and *Everybody Hates a Cop, Especially a Robber*, may have been Bryan's inspiration.

Congratulations, Bryan! And thanks to Will Fleming, another Kawanhee alum who called this to our attention just before press time!

## REFLECTIONS of a J.C. TREKKER

by Reid Greimann

*(Editor's Note: Last summer Kawanhee added a new dimension to its Junior Counselor program, a 10-day wilderness trip. Reid Greimann, who is back with us this year as a senior counselor, wrote about his experience, and the photographs that follow show Kawanhee Junior Counselors in some of Maine's finest places. This summer the program will be continued in a modified form, with our own staff rather than with Outward Bound.)*

Last camp season was a different experience for me, one full of growth and new perspective. Not only was I entering the season as a counselor for the first time, but also with the weight of both anticipation and apprehension at the news that all of the first year Junior Counselors were going to have the opportunity to experience an Outward Bound adventure. I was familiar with the idea of such programs from some of my friends who had gone on similar trips, and I had read about it in the packet of information that had been sent to me by Pete St. John over the summer, but the whole idea was still nervous-making. While the challenge seemed as though it would be both exciting and rewarding, the thought of ten days on a trail seemed more daunting than it did gratifying. On that first day back to camp, as I saw all of my fellow first year junior counselors for the first time in ten moons, there was one overarching question that high jacked all of our conversation: What in the world are we getting ourselves into?

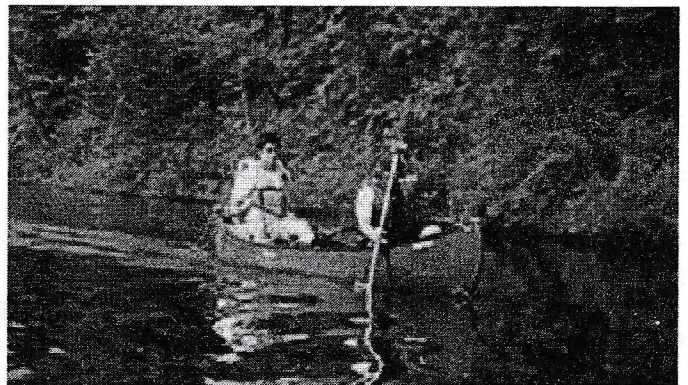
As can be imagined, the trip was faced with some initial resentment from most of us. Not only was it not optional, but it required sacrificing a sizable portion of a camp season that already seems to move way too fast. We all knew that whatever we were about to face was going to push us all out of our comfort zones and force us to challenge ourselves in all aspects, both physically and mentally. No one wanted to leave the extremely warm and safe camp grounds to go out into the cold and uncomfortable woods. It seemed that no sooner had we settled into our places in camp, finally getting to know both our kids and co-counselors, that we were being sent off all on our own with very little explanation or preparation for what we were about to face. While the trip was obviously something that the camp felt would strengthen us as a group as well as individuals, it was difficult to see as we were shipped out, how this trip would be very enjoyable. All of us could not help but be a little skeptical about whether this trip would be the best use of our time at camp.

When we finally got out onto the trail, the experience shifted once again. There was no more use complaining about the injustice of being sent on this trip while the second year junior counselors got to go to Quebec. The decision had already been decided for us. We were all together, dropped in the middle of nowhere on the Appalachian Trail, and all we had were each other and the packs on our backs. We looked ahead and knew that the road would be long and challenging but there was no other choice but to get it done, and together we set off into the unknown. While it may have seemed as though the end was forever away, there was nothing left to do but to keep putting one foot in front of the other.

As advertised the trip was nothing if not challenging. It was a challenge physically, hiking upwards of eight miles a day on one of the most difficult stretches of

the AT, and then paddling the entire length of Upper and Lower Richardson of the Rangeley Lakes. It was an individual struggle as we were forced to push ourselves to keep going, through the heat, sweat, and mosquito bites, and then through the cold and the rain. It was a challenge as a group, as we all relied on each other to share the gear that we needed to carry, and to push each other to keep going through things like our two mile bushwhack or our canoe portage. We relied on each other for assurance and encouragement that we would all survive our overnight solo experiences. From the beginning to the end we were both alone as individuals to make sure that we pulled our own weight, and all together as one to make sure that each one of us made it through collectively. The challenge was placed in front of us and we achieved our goal.

The trip in itself turned out to be a once in a lifetime opportunity. I learned new things about backpacking and camping as well as about my fellow counselors. I saw amazing scenery and things that I would have never seen otherwise, and got to spend ten days with some of my closest friends. When it was over I was exhausted and ready to return to camp, but I was full of the satisfaction that I had really done something to be proud of. In remembering back on the trip and really thinking about what we accomplished in those ten days, I feel like much of the power of what I experienced was not in the trip itself, but in the reflection on all of the things that it took to make it happen. We all had to overcome our original resentment and come together to accomplish something that seemed impossible just 10 days earlier. We had to face all the challenges that the weather, the bugs, our bodies, and our guides provided for us and much of the power of the trip lay in how we emerged from it all so triumphantly. I am proud of myself for what I accomplished and even more so I am proud of all of the people with whom I experienced the trip, for we all took it like true Kawanheens and made the best of it all. I am only 18 years old but I know that I will not forget the ten days that I spent on my Outward Bound adventure, getting to know both myself and my friends in such an extraordinary circumstance. I would like to thank Camp Kawanhee for giving me yet another opportunity to learn about and understand both myself and others, as well as nature and the world around me.





## CONTRIBUTIONS - THANK YOU!

The George and Raymond Frank Foundation appreciates the strong support of Kawanhee's alumni and friends. The following donors listed below have made contributions since the last listing of gifts in the September 2005 issue of the Wigwam.

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*Bruce Andre – framed photos from the 1928 and 1930 camp season  
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## OBITUARY

We report with sadness the death of Tim McKee, a Kawanhee camper in the 1960's and nature counselor in the 1970's, who died in Boston this spring at the age of 53. Tim was ever loyal and devoted to Camp Kawanhee, and he caught up with many of his Kawanhee friends and memories at the Reunion in August. Tim's family, in recognition of his many happy summers spent at camp, have identified the George and Raymond Frank Foundation's scholarship fund as the charity to which Tim's friends are encouraged to contribute in his memory. Many such donations have already been made. Those wishing to contribute in Tim's memory may make checks payable to the George and Raymond Frank Foundation, writing "in memory of Tim McKee" on the memo line of the check, and mailing to: George and Raymond Frank Foundation, P. O. Box 789, Yarmouth, ME 04096. All such contributions will be applied to the scholarship fund unless otherwise specified by the donor; the Foundation typically provides over \$50,000 in scholarship assistance each year to campers with financial need.

*Kawanhee Alumni Wigwam Editor: Mark Standen*

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