



# HEMLOCK HAPPENINGS



Christmas Edition



December 2011

*From home to home, and heart to heart, from one place to another, the warmth and joy of Christmas brings us closer to each other ~ Emily Matthews*

## GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is one year and a day since I received that fateful call from Peter Woods. Two days later I made the trek to our beloved camp and witnessed the utter destruction first hand. I knew in my heart that things would never be the same. Little did I realize how true that prediction would become.

If someone had said that one year and a day later we would be in position of better than before the windstorm... I knew two things had to be true. First, what I was looking at was a task that would be very difficult for an ordinary volunteer organization to handle. Second, Berwick campers are not an ordinary volunteer organization.

I made a small posting to my Facebook page this week that I want to share with this larger audience. In it I said I had used my trusty thesaurus to obtain some different words to describe the work that was accomplished in this last year. Amazing is the word most often used. It truly was an amazing year. However, it was also astonishing, astounding, remarkable, mind boggling and my favourite: miraculous.

The weather this fall has been much more co-operative than in the spring. Eric, Tim and the crew are still hard at work building. The last I saw they were resurrecting, and I mean resurrecting, the octagon cottage with plans to do more if the snow holds off!

I want my note in this Christmas edition of the Hemlock Happenings to reflect on the past camp year, but also embrace the promise of an even better "next year" We achieved something this year, that last January, seemed next to impossible. Many of you are thinking I am referring to the fact that camp enrollment was up from the previous year. While that was a major feat, I am referring to something that was more challenging.

Seven years ago we embarked on a new path of fiscal responsibility. At that time we agreed we could not sustain the camp over the long term, if we continued to use all our donations to pay for the day-to-day operations of the camp. Our insurance coverage, while inexpensive, really was not adequate or appropriate. We were neglecting the ongoing maintenance of our buildings, as we did not have sufficient revenue to pay for it. Our camp was basically rotting into the ground before our very eyes. We would be challenged to meet new regulations that were facing us from various government inspections such as food; power; building, to name a few. We were one crisis away from sheer disaster.

Since that time, we have increased our revenues with the expressed goal of balancing our operation budget. The cost to operate the camp needs to be paid for from the revenues we receive from our campers and renters. This allows for all the donations to be used to improve our camp through capital expenditures. Now to the miraculous part. At our executive meeting at the end of November our treasurer, Dawn Wood, presented our current financial statement. It shows, if nothing unforeseen happens in December, we will have a balanced operation budget for 2011! Now I know this may be considered boring. New buildings, great new programs, and more bathrooms are what we want to hear about. This is, however, foundational to our future.

Operationally we are in a position of strength, however, the total rebuild cost is still unknown and the Rejuvenation 2015 fundraising target is \$1 million. This means we can now concentrate on the financing of the rejuvenation. Our initial fund raising efforts have produced pledges over the next 5 years of \$75,000. You still have time to make a donation this calendar year and a tax receipt will be issued. As you and your family members make financial plans for next year, we ask that you consider Berwick Camp in your plans.

I want to tell you some things that are planned for next year: great leadership; new cottages; more programming; and excellent food. The details can be found if you go to our website and read the minutes from the November meeting. When you find them they look long. That is because they are. We were very thorough and efficient at that meeting covering lots of topics from pets to parking, food to tractors, and a chaplain to acts of incorporation.

Berwick campers have what most do not have: two annual joyous seasons, July and December. We are presently in the midst of the festive Christmas season. May you and your family members enjoy the blessings of this beautiful time of year. May you be spiritually renewed and strengthened.

May we all look forward to next year's camp.

Gordon Cameron  
President, UCCMA

## PROGRAMMING PREVIEW 2012

***As we approach the New Year, here are is just a peak at what Berwick has in store for us!***

Berwick Camp 2012 is pleased to welcome **Mark Toulouse** as our **Evangelist** this year. Mark Toulouse is Principal and Professor of the History of Christianity at Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto. He and his spouse, Jessica, have three adult children, and three grandchildren. Toulouse is an historian of religion and culture, and the history of Christianity.

He holds a Ph.D. from The University of Chicago and is the author of several books. An ordained minister with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Toulouse regularly conducts workshops for ministers and lay people on topics pertaining to North American Christianity, religion and public life, interfaith dialogue, and theological education.

Berwick Campers will be able to look forward to extending a warm welcome to our **Bible Study /Theology for Today Leader ... Tom Reynolds**, Associate Professor of Theology at Emmanuel College. Committed to an interdisciplinary and relational vision of theology, his teaching and research seek to deepen Christian engagements with diversity and promote compassionate justice. As father of an autistic son, he has become especially interested in opening up the way people of faith think about and welcome people with disabilities into community life. Tom's recent book, "Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality", was shortlisted for the Michael Ramsey Prize.

**Music Leadership** for 2012 will be led by **Mark Ruhnke** - Music Director at St. Andrew's United Church in Toronto. We look forward to meeting Mark and having him share his musical talents with us all!



AND **Youth Leadership** for 2012 will be ..... **Rev. Bronwyn Corlett** and **Rev. Jennifer Canning** - recent graduates from Emmanuel College with lots of youth and music experience!! They are excited about the opportunity to experience Berwick!

A gathering is being planned for January in Toronto for all those in Leadership at Berwick for 2012!

## FROM THE TREASURER'S DESK

2011 has been a successful year even with the unbelievable challenges that have faced our camp. This was due to the commitments made by many to see our camping season occur as it had in the previous 139 years. You are probably not aware, but the staff is still working at the camp, as well as contractors. The great fall weather has allowed work to continue, and will go into 2012 as long as weather permits. Work started on January 31, 2011, so this is the longest working year in the camps history. The final insurance claims have been submitted. However the needs in 2012 will be many as the rebirth of our grounds and facilities are undertaken. It is never too late to make a Christmas donation to Berwick Camp as well. Several persons have gifted the camp in various ways. You may wish to propose a donation locally, as some churches were very generous last year. At your annual meeting you should have an opportunity to suggest that if surplus funds are available, perhaps the congregation may wish to consider a donation to our camp. Cheques are made out to Berwick Camp and sent to the address below. We do not receive annual funding from any level of the church; Presbytery, Conference, or National Office. It is your commitments, various UCW units, rentals, fund raisers, total strangers to our camp, and other sources, that have permitted us to continue to operate for 140 years. For this we are very thankful! We wish blessings to you all during this Christmas season and into the New Year, and with anticipation of Berwick 141.

Dawn Wood, Treasurer

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# REBUILT UPDATE

*Well, apparently Santa's elves have nothing on the Berwick Elves who have been hard at work since all of the camps wrapped up this summer. Here's an update from Eric .....*

On any given day we have from 5 to 14 people working on projects including the following...

- Railings installed down the halls of Dorms A & B - upstairs and down.
- C28 has a new roof - boards and shingles
- C24 has the board & batten completed and new steps for the side door
- New lights have been installed in the Covered Pavilion
- All of the buildings have had their locks reorganized so we have narrowed our key chains to 4 keys instead of 40.
- We have upgraded and fixed a lot of water and sewer lines.
- Approx. 10 more truckloads of stumps have been removed around cottages and miscellaneous buildings.
- Youth Centre – New Ramp has been installed.
- The VBS Washroom is almost finished!
- Open Air Shelter – It's almost complete...
- Lovely new door has been installed in the Oxley Centre
- They are now getting started on the Nursery add on.
- There is lots of milling going on!
- New well house has been built in Hollywood
- The Gatehouse is almost complete.
- Cottage 18 has new footings and work continues!

And list goes on - We're not quitting until the snow gets toooooo deep or the air gets tooo cold.



*All of the above pictures are as of Dec18/11. For more pics check out our facebook page!*

## FUNDRAISING NEWS

A big thanks to Chrissie Crooks for organizing a super successful Coffee House on November 12<sup>th</sup>, at Bethany United Church in Halifax. It was an evening of superb entertainment and scrumptious desserts – enjoyed by all! Thanks to everyone involved! The event raised \$2100, with an additional generous \$2000 donation made to the cause as well. Yay Berwick!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

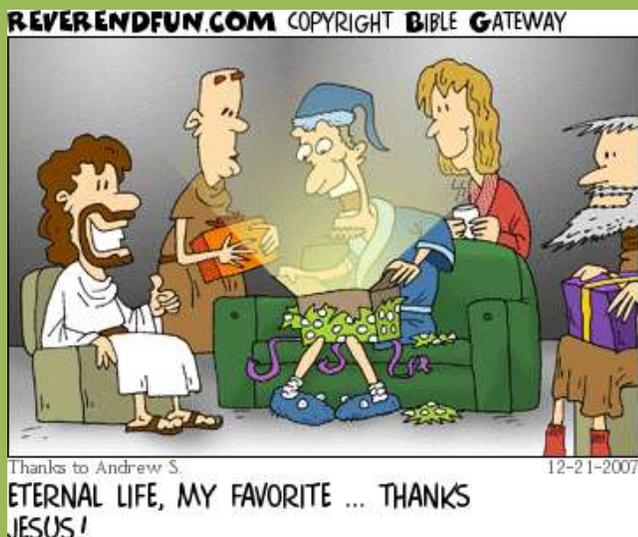
Over the past year and a half we have received many requests from numerous campers. These requests have ranged from something as simple as putting up a shelf in a cottage to something as complex as building a completely new cottage, and everything in between. While we have tried to keep a record of these requests so they could be appropriately addressed, given the amount of activity over the past year it is possible that some have been lost. As we organize and prioritize the work to be done in 2012, we would like to ask anyone who has made a request of us to do so again by email before January 1, 2012. Please send all replies to [eric.s@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:eric.s@ns.sympatico.ca). This will be a great help to us in our planning for the coming year.

~Eric Schurman and Tim O'Brien

Co-Chairs of the Property & Grounds Committee

Don't forget, the kitchen crew just love to have those knitted dish cloths! If you have the time and talent to knit some of those over the winter months, they would be greatly appreciated for camp ☺

## CHRISTMAS CHUCKLE



# CHRISTMAS BLESSING

*May the spirit of Christmas bring you peace,  
The gladness of Christmas give you hope,  
The warmth of Christmas grant you love.*

*~Author Unknown*