

Chikopi Chant

May 2001

Dear Alumni

We are packing up the office getting ready for the drive north to Chikopi. We heard through Carl that the weather is looking pretty good up there and they are predicting a long hot summer, which makes for a lot of time spent outdoors and cooling off on the Chikopi beach at Ahmic Lake.

As we start the 82nd summer of Chikopi we are reminded of all the great guys who have passed through the cabins and the chow lines at The Point on BBQ nights. It is fun to reminisce of those long hot summers as well as those days when we thought it would never stop raining, on canoe trips.

Oreo is doing his impersonation of a leech, his biggest fear is that we will accidentally forget to pack him and he will miss a summer of Earlybirds and Swim Training Practices. His soccer and basketball skills have not improved much but his 12K run is spot on, he has been keeping fit doing his 1 mile jog everyday. He was at the vet last week to receive his medical check-up and yearly injections he is all set to go. Are you? He is so excited I am positive I heard him barking a Chikopi Chant the other morning out the window as another dog walked by the house. Show off!

We have some great coaches set to come this summer, Olympic swim coaches and coaches from overseas to teach some of our more European sports, Team Handball, Cricket, Field Hockey, Rugby, etc.

Last year we had campers come to Chikopi from 19 different countries, we are close to that record again. This year, so far, we have 15 Countries signed up; Australasia: Australia, Japan, Thailand; Europe: England, Finland, France, Ireland, Poland, Scotland, Spain; North America: Canada, USA; South America: Guatemala, Mexico, Venezuela. With all these countries it is going to be another long night at the Banquet singing National Anthems.

We have a great group of guys signed up again this year with some new faces, which helps keep the Chikopi Alumni numbers growing every year. Keep up the good work you guys, remember the Chikopi 5 Year Gold Ring is yours after 35 weeks at Chikopi, we have two guys in line for their ring this summer: Juan-Pablo Lino and Ryan Mc Kee will receive their Chikopi ring this year and we have some guys well on their way, Nick Fieldhouse will have 31 weeks, Guillermo Jackson will have 21 weeks, Kevin Major will have 21 weeks, Dermot O'Brien will have 21 weeks. We have 3 guys closing in on the 10 Year Gold Watch, (70 weeks), Lesley MacDougall is in his 9th summer, Joey Breedon is in his 9th summer and Brian Tracy is in his 7th summer.

Roll-up, Roll-up, Roll-up only 4 weeks till Chikopi opens it's doors! For those guys not yet signed up we have enclosed/attached the 2001 Registration Form, as of going to print we have only 12 bunk spaces left for this summer, we would love to have you back, give us a call, if you need some persuasion we can always have Oreo stop by!!!!

Bye for now, Bob

CHIKOPI EXPLORERS

As the green and white Chikopi canoes slipped silently across the bay, the shoreline slowly became visible through the early morning mist. You could barely hear the water lap the boulders at the waters edge as a loon made an eerie call in the distance. Suddenly the morning silence is broken with a smacking noise on the water, I lift my paddle silently and point in the direction of the sound for the others to see. For David and Carlos it is their first time seeing a Beaver in the wild as it flipped its tail and dove out of sight. Eric had seen a Beaver before but got really excited when it popped up about a canoe length away from us and playfully followed us along for a few minutes before we saw and heard that familiar tail slap on the water as it dove out of site. Algonquin, the oldest Provincial Park in Ontario offers 7725 sq. km of the world's most famous canoeing area.

200 km north of Algonquin as the crow flies a group of Chikopians are having the time of their lives and getting soaked in the process. Chris and Joey wait patiently in the safety canoe at the bottom of the Blue Chutes ready to leap into action if the need arises. Several campers ride the haystack waves down the deep channel lying back with their lifejackets on and their sandals up in the safety position. As they reach the bottom they swim for the shore, haul themselves out and race back up to the top for another go round. Everyone watches intently as the canoe with Guillermo and Malcolm wave a paddle in the air at the top of the chute, ready to descend. With the all-clear signal from the safety canoe below they start the decent. Guillermo does a bow draw to line up the canoe with the dark blue tongue that indicates the deep fast water. They rocket down the chute doing draws and pry's, along with a few sweeps to avoid the rock wall. As the canoe reaches the bottom it bounces over the haystacks taking on some water before turning into the eddy next to the safety canoe. Already a group is waving from the shore. They want to give it a go, now that they see another camper has made it through safely.

The French River, recognized, as a Canadian Heritage River has remained relatively undisturbed through time. The shorelines you camp along are the same ones Champlain saw in 1615. If you listen carefully around the campfire at night, cooking your Bannock Bread on a stick over the hot coals you can just imagine what the famous & rugged Voyagers experienced as they cooked their dinner and sang folk songs before bedding down for the night. These tough voyagers would maneuver their freighter canoes through interconnecting lakes, gorges, rapids and swifts along this historic transportation route known as the last obstacle to overcome. Soon they would finish the 4-month excursion at Georgian Bay, where sailing ships would load up furs from the Voyagers and huge timbers for the long voyage back to Europe. The Chikopi trippers are thankful they can enjoy the scenery, cook great meals and have some lazy mornings. But most of all they thank god they only have to carry 25kg - 40kg packs and cedar strip canoes over the portage; unlike the many trips of 150kg loads each of the voyagers had to carry. What a great experience and character builder. I can't wait to plan and take my next canoe trip this summer with some fellow Chikopians.

Camp Chikopi is planning some more great trips this summer and you will want to choose the best trip that peaks your interest and challenges your abilities. With so many great trips you can't help but enjoy your time with new friends and test the skills you have developed during your time spent here at Chikopi.

I can't wait to see each and every one of you up here at Chikopi. □ Malcolm