

# Memories of Camp Kawabi



During the summer of 2024, the Stanhope Heritage Museum presented an exhibit of the history of Camp Kawabi.

The three children of Bruce and Doreen Harris lent us many of their camp artifacts and photos.

We invited visitors to share their memories of their time at camp. Here are some comments that were shared via a drop box at the museum.

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My journey at Camp Kawabi began as a wide-eyed camper in August 1974 and evolved into a counsellor until 1985, holding a special place in my heart and shaping who I am today. Reflecting on those years, it's clear that Camp Kawabi wasn't just a place—it was a community where lifelong friendships and unforgettable memories were made.

The night my camp name, Ee-no, was bestowed upon me by the senior staff—Muskie, Luten, and Butch—remains etched in my memory. The thoughtful deliberation to move away from my initial choice of "Flash" in favour of a name that better captured my bubbly personality speaks volumes about the supportive environment at the camp. The analogy to Eno tablets, bubbling with effervescence in water, resonated deeply with my lively spirit. Personalizing the name with a unique spelling, adding an e and hyphen, made it distinctly mine, symbolizing my place within the close-knit fabric of Camp Kawabi.

My commitment to the camp community, spanning over a decade as both a camper and counsellor, reflects my deep connection and dedication. Beyond the activities and adventures,

Camp Kawabi became a second home—a place where I flourished, made lifelong friends, and created enduring bonds.

Looking back, I cherish countless moments and experiences at Camp Kawabi. Thank you for all the memories!!

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June 1967. Pre-camp (a short week when staff gets ready for the camp sessions). I was a 16 year old CIT who had never been to Kawabi.

Skip tells us that all new staff should come up with a camp name for themselves; if we can't, then the whole staff will come up with one for them.

Well, I had a good one. For several years, I'd become known as Twink (short for Twinkletoes - because I was so light on my feet - I was 6 foot 2 or so and over 200 pounds at the time).

So the appointed time came and all 30 or so staff were gathered in the lodge to confirm the camp names for staff newbies. When my turn came up, I proudly said my name should be Twink and gave the rationale for same. Unfortunately, about 5 minutes earlier, a new female staff member picked Twinkle as her camp name and this was confirmed by the group.

Now it's clear that there couldn't be both a Twinkle and a Twink on staff. So what to do? Fortunately (?), Crash (the counsellor with whom I had been teamed) came up with the brilliant suggestion that my name should be Toes. Approved unanimously and so it has been ever since.

One other quick thought: The 6 years I spent at Kawabi in the 60s and 70s, were, without doubt, the happiest and most important years of my life. This is a very special place for many people.

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Camp Kawabi Camper 1977-1983, Staff Member 1984-1989. Loved my camp experience at Kawabi! My staff name was Zeppo. I remember thinking about what my camp name would be after my very first summer as a camper. It was so much fun trying to guess the “real names” of our counsellors every summer.....it was always a big secret. Although my name was chosen with a group of friends (5 girlfriends at a cottage all taking on a name of one of the Marx brothers) just before going to camp my first summer on staff, I remember the excitement of wondering if my camp name would be accepted and it was!

Kawabi was a very special place for me and I still carry many Kawabi traditions with me.

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Camp Kawabi 1990-1999 (4 years as a camper and 6 years on staff).

Driving up the camp road and crossing our fingers the bus would make it up the hill! Long days of constant fun and activity, overnights on lakes so clean we drank from them, outtripper day trips to local favourite spots like the dam and Stanhope beach, amazing canoe trips like the Milk Run and "55". Traditional meals, nightly camp-wide games, the dance, movie nights, buckets and squares, the candlelight canoe. Mostly, I remember the amazing people, many of whom I'm still close friends with. So grateful for the memories and for the opportunity to spend my summers in this beautiful outdoor oasis (as a city kid). I now rent a cottage here to spend time in the place I hold very close to my heart.

I have lots of pictures!

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Camp Kawabi 1988-1999

I was known as an enthusiastic, energetic and loud camper. I embraced all aspects of camp life - activities, meals, kabobs, swimming the lake, sing song and most importantly, the people. The word "fracas" in the English language means a loud disturbance. A perfect fit!

Absolutely has photos to share.

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Camp Kawabi 1967 & 1968

So many wonderful memories. Puts a smile on my face thinking of the camp from the early years through to now. Thanks for the memories. Early morning swims, skit nights, canoe trips, camp mascot, apple crisp dessert, night water, fun times, sad goodbyes (teary parting with friends)

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Camp Kawabi 1974, 75, 76, 77

Memories - teaching swimming, buckets & squares, after meal sing songs, so many friendships & memories. Well done Christine & Connie!

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Camp Kawabi 1985-92?

Chapel was my favourite time of the week. Such a peaceful time to come together, sing (my fave) and tell stories. Skip always has many words of wisdom. Walking in the tent line at night with the oil rangers. Painting my name in the craft hut was such an honour.

I will send photos!

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Camp Kawabi 1979, 80, 81

Too many fond memories to list just one. My time there will always be special and close to my heart. The love and respect we had for each other I have never experienced again with any team. Skip meant the world to me and truly helped shape who I became as an adult.

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Camp Kawabi 1975-86

My memories are too numerous to share. My time at Camp Kawabi, the relationships, the experiences, formed a foundation for my adult life. I went on to teach at the elementary level and ended my career as a principal. I still, to this day, have camp dreams and have maintained friendships from camp to this day. I am grateful to have a lifetime of memories with all my brothers and sisters from camp.

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Camp Kawabi 1975(6) - 88 (Skip wouldn't let me come back - too old lol)

I have too many memories to share - Kawabi was a huge part of who I am - all the great relationships that I still keep and all the life lessons that Bruce and Doreen taught me. I couldn't wait for school to be over so I could spend my whole summer at camp and never calling home. Thank you Stanhope Museum to keep that Kawabi spirit alive.

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Camp Kawabi 1991-95 (camper) 1996-2001 (staff)

Memories: canoeing, swimming, "buckets & squares", dance, cinnamon butter, water skiing, bug juice, ping pong, tether ball. Thanks for the trip down memory lane!

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Camp Kawabi 1993-2005

So many great memories & friendships! Miss Bruce (Skip) and Doreen (Nish) & coming to Kawabi. So glad for this exhibit!

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Camp Kawabi

Memories: Hawk Lake Canoe Race

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