



SKOOKUMEE

Summer 2021!

Camp Season Update

By Mark, Liz and JP

We have had a busy and wildly successful first couple weeks of camp. The big news, after two rounds of testing, we are ecstatic to report that we have had **zero covid cases in camp!** We had been erring on the side of caution but with the favorable test results, we have relaxed some of the rules for our staff and vaccinated campers. We continue to do wellness checks of all campers each day and will continue to enforce our “no visitors” policy throughout the season.

So what's it like at camp? It has been buzzing! Every camper has hiked a mountain, most lodges have spent a night out in the woods and every lodge has cycled through every activity at least twice! We celebrated Independence Day with the traditional “Amerifest” intra-lodge competitions, featuring some spirited games and red, white, and blue get-ups. The weather has been a study of contrasts. Polar Bear swims have remained a popular way to begin the day, followed by the donning of layers of clothing in unusual combinations. There are definitely groundbreaking fashion statements being made here every day, most of them proudly incoherent.

Another exciting frontier each summer comes through the **Junior Counselor's community service projects**. Last Thursday they all gave project proposals in the form of oral presentations in front of camp leadership. This summer's projects include: building roofed area in Ropes for rainy days and activity optimization, planting a collection of trees, revamping our fire-engine housing, and re-imagining the JMG storage room. The future looks bright when you see this sort of initiative and thoughtfulness in these young men.

A last necessary accolade, our heartfelt respect goes to the **astoundingly resilient and spirited staff**. They came in expecting a highly rigorous summer and have embraced the importance of why we are doing what we are doing, and simply made it all about the kids. We are honored to be part of this historic team.

The energy around camp is palpable. You can really feel that everyone here has needed this – to restore our common humanity and pick up where we left off two years ago! We are deeply grateful for the vote of confidence the parents and guardians of our campers have entrusted with us to make all this possible. It gives us the clearest sense of purpose to see these wonderful kids regain some childhood freedom, and help protect the safety and quality of that experience.

All the best from Weld, Maine!



SCENES FROM THE FIRST 3 WEEKS!





2021 Opening Ceremony

by John Bell



The message delivered in past years by Chief Kawanhee at the outset of the season has been powerful, and inspiring, over decades. It has been about ideals, about human potential, about reverence and awe for our natural surroundings. It has contained universal and time-honored conceptions of love, of courage, of integrity and generosity. It has retained a palpable solemnity.

Kawanhee is continually evolving, as any healthy organization should be. And by this summer, we have evolved away from the character of Chief Kawanhee.

We have done our level best in revising our Opening Ceremony this season to keep all of what was central --integral-- to it. It seems to me that everything that made the ceremony what it was is still very much intact; it feels as inspiring as it ever was. Council Point remains hallowed ground, sacred to the memories of thousands of Kawanhees. The only difference by 2021 is that some ordinary 21st century corporeal being like me, unassumingly dressed in a flannel shirt and chinos, is the one who is speaking.

I first experienced the ceremony at Council Point as a spellbound Pine Tree lodge camper in 1971, and would never have imagined then that I would be asked to take over the role of the Chief by 2006. I was both honored and a bit intimidated. Richard Estabrook, who had done an excellent job as Chief for over twenty years by that time, handed me the script and wished me well, reminding me that I was free to add to it as I saw fit, to make it reflect both my own experience of Kawanhee and my understanding of the ceremony -- its intended purpose.



After some thought, I did indeed add new paragraphs, and some key vocabulary, and these were very carefully considered additions. This tradition, I knew, was extremely important to a great many people -- it has belonged to all of us over the years. We each have our own experience of the ceremony; it has meaning for each of us, in different ways. And in revising the script, I felt accountable to every one of these Kawanhees, both campers and staff, both past and present.

What I added then, and what has been retained in this summer's new version, was an emphasis on Kawanhee as a rare and exceptional community that is principled, compassionate, and supportive of each member. There is mention of living deliberately -- purposefully; there is mention of the tremendous potential for personal growth in profoundly significant ways. The concept of integrity is there: speaking with integrity, conducting one's self with integrity, keeping one's word. Gratitude is mentioned more than once. Essentially, I was careful to add mention of these things because I learned and experienced them over my years at camp.

My first summer at Kawanhee was nothing short of life-changing. I arrived a shy and fearful eleven-year-old who lacked confidence in himself; I left at the end of the season with a belief in my abilities and my potential I had never had before. This was thanks to the Kawanhee community of that season, and to some exceptional counselors who encouraged me. I was the last kid in camp to swim the lake that summer -- the last week of the season -- and I accomplished the feat only because camp staff refused to give up on me.



A ten year run as a full-time staff member, all through the 80's, further shaped my life in very positive and essential ways. The theme of Kawanhee's belief in me was alive and well throughout, as I was promoted to ever-increasing levels of responsibility regarding my particular job at camp: boating director, campcraft director, trip leader (What a great job to have!) and five seasons as a director of activities -- the most meaningful job I have ever had, next to my career as an educator. Through my college years, Kawanhee is where I came of age, and it has made all the difference in my life.

So that is, for me, why the opening and closing ceremonies are so important. That is why the responsibility of assuming the role of the Chief, and now simply the role of speaker, has felt like such a serious and high stakes endeavor. I know, through lived experience on these hallowed shores, that the words spoken at Council Point are anything but empty rhetoric. They have been proven true, not just for me, but for countless others.

I want to thank my friends in positions of leadership at camp -- the Standens, the Yales, members of the Frank Foundation board of directors --especially Graham Marvin-- and J.P. Rullan, our camp director, for their help and suggestions as we set about the delicate process a few weeks ago of revising a message that has meant so much to so many. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of hammering-out, with them, something new, yet familiar. May there always be a Kawanhee, and may it continue to evolve, and change lives for the better. I could never give back enough.



Opening Ceremony

Camper Responses

It was very peaceful, a contrast to the normal loudness around camp. I loved the singular narrator, making it easier to focus on one thing.

Liam Sherwood, Lynx

"It was epic!"

Raul Marcial, Falcon

"It was surreal and strange in the beginning with the moving music. The fire brought a sense of warmth and comfort. It's really important to talk about the Native Americans of the past."

Gage Sergel, Lynx

"It was really majestic, like this place is majestic. Time flies so fast, so enjoy it while you are here."

Rafael Dalmau, Falcon

"It was a chill, good way to sum up the rest of the summer. It made me want to try new things that I otherwise would not want to try."

Will Barney, Lynx

"The ceremony was a window into the traditions of Camp that inspired the spirit of Kawanhee and all that it beholds. The spiritual presence of others before me compelled me to truly embrace the Kawanhee Spirit."

Sam Rosberger, Moose

"As we strolled through the shady trail leading to Council Point, I dreaded but welcomed what was next to come. The surreal music only solidified the mystery of the ceremony. I immediately realized the seriousness of the ceremony. I loved taking a look into the past. I could imagine the thoughts and feelings of not only the previous campers but the native people that walked these grounds many years ago."

Cameron Abrahams, Lynx



"The beginning was strange but moving. It made me want to try new things. I loved when JP lit the fire. And I loved the welcoming feel of it."

Riley Barnes, Lynx

"The chants were very cool!"

Leo Marvin, Moose

"I liked the first fire because you truly realized who your family was and that everyone was there for you."

Charlie Gillespie, Hawk



"I loved how they enforced the key messages of Camp. I got excited to experience new things at Camp. It felt like a very meaningful ceremony, a very surreal and serious moment when I was chosen for the wind."

Nicolas Colon, Lynx

"I thought it was a really cool experience and fun to listen to all the music."

Max Freudenberg, Beaver

"It felt like camp started!"

Luca Akin, Moose

I thought it was a really nice night for it. it was more natural, not forced.

Colin Mellen, Crow

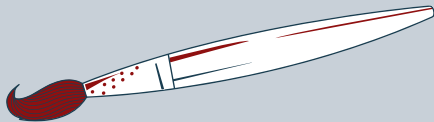


"I loved the sternness and solemnity. I loved when the fire grew to a momentous height and sparks meandered in the dirt."

Nacho Lamoute, Lynx

Art 2021 & Tallulah Torres's First CK Summer

by Diana Yale



I sat down with Tallulah Torres, our new Art staff member, and had a wonderful conversation getting to know her and finding out about all the exciting things happening in Art this summer.

Diana: So, what brought you to Kawanhee?

Tallulah: My friend Kai had been here for a while and mentioned there was a spot in Art, and then I talked to JP and became really interested. So I decided on an adventure across the country. I am an Art History minor at the University of Oregon in Eugene, and so the Kawanhee Art program seemed like a good fit for a summer job.

D: Talk to me about what you're doing in Art.

T: Part of the reason I came to Camp is that as an Art History student, I wanted to incorporate different artists into the curriculum, artists who have changed the world of art in unique ways. Kai and I have decided to teach about two "Artists of the Week," including a presentation using technology--one a physical artist and the other a musical artist. The first week we highlighted Lauryn Hill, a multi-talented singer/songwriter, and Jean-Michel Basquiat, one of the most influential artists of the 20th century. This week we are doing Latina artists Frida Kahlo and Selena Quintanilla-Perez. We are focusing on artists who are imperfect so that kids are able to see that they don't need to be perfect, that they can push boundaries and be inspired by the works of the artists they study and try to change the world.

D: What projects are you working on, and what future art ideas do you have?

T: We are doing mostly pottery, sewing, free drawing, and making bracelets for now. For the future, we would like to explore screen printing, sewing pillows, knitting/crocheting, textiles, sketch books for daily prompts, team points for projects, self portraits, still lifes, and sunset painting down at the lake. We'd like to hold an art show at the end with artists writing their own bios and captions, gallery style.



D: Why teach Art?

T: Art is such a great coping skill that helps foster creativity; it is something that helps kids keep going. If you create something, put something down, the rest comes easy. I encourage people to keep drawing, keep creating, until you are old and wrinkled and cannot create anymore.

D: Any last thoughts about Art?

T: Well, to grow as an artist, you have to be accumulating firsthand experience and knowledge, you need influencers to help inspire you, which is why we are teaching Art History to help the kids find inspiration from other artists.

Diana: Who has influenced you?

T: Frida Kahlo for sure and the surrealist artist Salvador Dali. Also Henri Matisse, among others.

D: What are your thoughts about Kawanhee as a first year Art Counselor?

Tallulah: I love being here for personal growth reasons, and I can see the program improving and see the kids learning Art. So far, I feel like I have connected with the kids and are helping them grow as well.





GREY

CAPTAIN: CARLOS RUIZ
CO-CAPTAIN: ETHAN HALL



**CAPTAIN: JED MORGAN
CO-CAPTAIN: PAUL CALCAGNI**

MAROON

Allagash Adventure by Jed Morgan

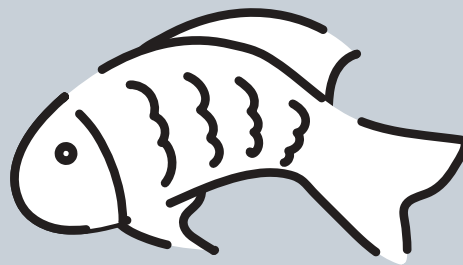
Early last week, the Junior Counselors (J.C.s) embarked on a 60 mile paddle through the northern Maine woods. The Allagash trip has become a J.C. tradition and the 2021 season was no exception to this.

Trip leader Max Balmaceda and J.C. trip leader Tristan Arp led the group of Junior Counselors through the unusually shallow river, the lakes and ponds along the way, and the intense rapids to see sights like Allagash Falls and Long Lake Dam. Throughout the trip, both counselors and J.C.s cooked fancy meals such as Shrimp Scampi and Steak. More importantly, the group of leaders in training got to spend quality time on the river to bond usually by playing the card game "President." The group managed to dodge some thundershowers and return just in time before Hurricane Elsa hit Kawanhee!



So Many Fish....

So Little Time



Fish and Fishing At Kawanhee

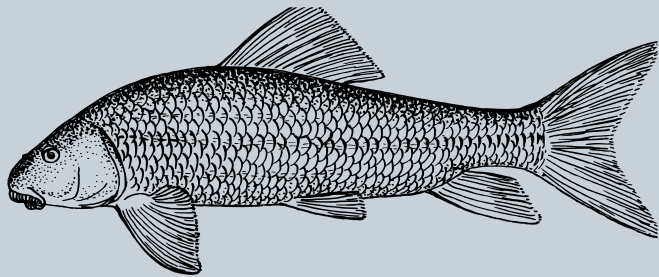
by John Bell

Fishing, in all of its forms, has been an integral part of the traditional Kawanhee experience, the Kawanhee ethos, from its inception. We fish the lake, mornings and evenings; we flycast from the raft in the cove; we've headed-out, north of here, to cast a fly on the fabled flowages of the Rangeley region we are so fortunate to be near. We are proud of our fishing traditions at Kawanhee, and I personally am very happy to see my good friend, Steve Yale, able to return this season, and lead the fishing program; he's got a lot of interested campers, and is teaching some to fly fish. (I help a little.) I am excited to see our burgeoning corps of young and eager anglers, and look forward to sharing with them the gift that is ours at Kawanhee of fishing within "the environs where trout are found, which are invariably beautiful."



There is something about fishing. There is anticipation, and mystery; there is wonder, and surprise. There is excitement, and exhilaration, and, sometimes, frustration and disappointment. Fishing holds possibilities, and has myriad manifestations. These range from the simplicity and delight of sitting on a dock and watching a bobber jiggle and duck under the surface, to the adventure of wading through the rapids of a brawling northwoods river, floating a fly over the heads of the salmon and brook trout that you know are there.

As with other traditional outdoor pursuits --wilderness camping, or hunting, for instance--fly fishing concerns a wealth of specific skills, knowledge and lore for one generation to pass on to the next. There are ethics to model, to instill. There is so much to be learned: about the fish, about who they are, where they are, and why; about what they'll take, and what they won't; and a plenitude of rather arcane knowledge that is unique to the art of fly fishing. There is much to be taught by direct example: casting, fishing technique, knots and fly tying. Fishing trips in the Maine woods often involve canoeing, a traditional corollary that is an art in itself, mastered by few, with an aesthetic all its own.



Fishing teaches, and the learning is multifaceted, open-ended, and lifelong. It teaches patience, and humility. Fish are unpredictable; they can be recalcitrant, contrary, and sometimes maddeningly particular. They can be absent from where they “should” be; they can ignore what they “should” want; they can inexplicably seize what they “shouldn’t” want that day. Fishing teaches problem-solving --where the fish are, and what they might be feeding on-- and, more importantly, teaches at the same time that there is more involved --more required-- than mere problem solving.

Catching a fish on a fly is often not a simple and clean “insert tab A into slot B” proposition. There is no sure-fire formula. A flyfisher is fortunate if he or she can begin to appreciate early that the entire endeavor is not solely about numbers of fish caught; it is rather about the experience of trying --the journey, as opposed to the destination. Those who are prone to keep score, to narrowly judge the “success” of a day on the water by the numbers of fish caught, are missing something important. While the point may appear to be to catch lots of fish, the point is actually, and perhaps paradoxically, both exactly that and at the same time not that at all. The true success is the attainment of the proper attitude.

(Of course, the above may be little more than an elaborate rationalization for the embarrassment of a fishless day out...But it is not. Well, paradoxically, it is, and it isn't.)



Of the wealth of memories each Kawanhee season leaves us with, it is those involving fish and fishing, for many of us, that are among the most cherished. As I look back over my camper and counselor days, I can recall a number of these: evening trips on the lake featuring pickerel, bass, and the ubiquitous white perch; early morning fishing in the narrows while on a lodge overnight on Skookumee Beach; fishing from the sailing dock after dinner with my buddies; from a rowboat in the cove; early morning times on the Webb River down the road. And there were forays out of town: the Sandy River in Phillips, above the Rt. 142 bridge; from the Byron road, the secret and ephemeral beaver pond near the Loop trailhead; and the Swift River, where we used to pan gold with good old Bates and Charlie Damrey. There were trips to the storied waters of Upper Dam, the Kennebago in Rangeley, the Rapid River. Some of us have even caught brook trout on the top of Tumbledown (they like dragonfly larvae imitations). I remember flycasting on the Chain of Ponds trip in '71 and at Coos Canyon the same season --my first at camp. I caught no fish, but that is no matter.

Those of us who fish the waters here in Maine's western mountains are privileged, indeed. Far from the crowds, we fish with loons, ospreys and kingfishers for company; we share the rivers and lakes with otters, moose and beavers. We may range along the banks of a wild and lonely river all day, casting in blissful solitude; we may fish with friends, or family members. But we fish, because we love to. We love where it takes us; we love what it does for us.







Want some more Kawanhee media?

We think you'll appreciate these CK links:

[-Full 2021 Camp Season Photo Gallery](#)

-->This is updated week by week!

-->Password hint: Campers earn a "K" on their paddle by swimming to this geological feature. All lowercase and no spaces.

[-Kawanhee's Youtube Channel](#)

***[Kawanhee From Home - A Look Back](#)

***[CK Past and Current Family Virtual Testimonials](#)

***[Kawanhee Archival Footage](#)

[-Soundtrack to Kawanhee From Home](#) - featuring music by Eddie Trayner, Gordon Magne, Brandon Helgason, Forrest Magne, and Eli Yale

[-Our Facebook page](#)

[-Our Instagram page](#)

-And if you're in the position to do so, please consider [donating to Camp Kawanhee](#).



Thank YOU for reading and thanks to all of our contributors for sharing. Kawanhee cheers to everyone involved in making the 2021 Season possible!

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