



# THE CONISTON CHRONICLE

THE NEWSLETTER FOR CAMP CONISTON CAMPERS, STAFF AND ALUMNI • FALL 2009

The story of Meghan Salvas' first day at Coniston is a perfect example of her whole experience at Camp.

"There I was, nine years old, first session in '91, first day at sleepaway camp. My parents made my bed and unpacked my little trunk into my camp drawer, and they were up at the flagpole while I was down at the dock, waiting for my swim test.

"I heard them say, 'Meghan, we're leaving,' ... and I just lifted my hand and gave them an over-the-shoulder wave, I didn't even turn around, I was so ready to go!"

Meghan didn't have time to write a postcard home that week, "... I was busy getting dirty and having fun with my friends. I loved it, and next year I wanted to go for a month!"

Brad Ship has a slightly different take on his Coniston experience, but with a similar feeling.

"There's a baseline that you're having a great time and it's really fun. But for a lot of kids, you go through school with the same kids you've known since kindergarten. If you were 'the goofy kid' in kindergarten, you're the goofy kid when you graduate high school.

## Meghan Salvas and Brad Ship



### A Coniston Story of Friendship, Love and Generosity



*"Stepping out of our comfort zones to be crazy for an ice cream social!"*

"At Camp ... well first of all, being a goofy kid is a good thing! ("Absolutely!" chimes in Meghan.) But at Coniston you sort of have the chance to start over, to re-invent yourself. The chance to have that growth, and to craft an environment where everyone's so open and accepting ... it's really powerful."

### A Personal Choice for The Wedding

Meghan and Brad became friends when they were CITs in '97-'98, and they married in 2008. But they made an unusual choice for their wedding favors.

"Instead of giving out the usual guest gifts, we decided to donate a Campership to Coniston, in honor of our guests.

"And we were surprised how much it ended up being ... those favors really added up!"

How did everyone react to this unusual choice? "Oh, yeah ... for you guys this makes perfect sense!"

### A Worthy Cause

"There are lots of worthy charities that we support," Meghan said. "We both worked at Camp Winning Spirit for many summers ... but we really felt that Camp is our foundation, not just of our relationship, but of our characters."

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When I was growing up there was a lady next door who was like a grandmother to me.

Her name was Nanny, and I remember sitting on her porch in wooden rocking chairs. She'd tell me stories of the past, ask me to sing for her and her friends, and as I got older she would ask me to help with tasks around her house and property.

Believe me; Nanny was very meticulous when I helped her with her gardens. She was particular about weeding, pruning, and her lawn ... and she taught me to do things right.

Years later I still have that interest in gardening. It's the reason my yard, and Camp, are filled with gardens and flowers ... and I'm just as careful now as when Nanny first taught me.

Did Nanny know anything about "going green?" Certainly she was careful and frugal ... and she even had dislike for chemical fertilizer. But that isn't what I am talking about.

What Nanny did was a type of recycling. She recycled the love and attention she received as a child, through her interactions with me. "Going green" and "recycling" ... both are very popular words these days. But

## Director's 2¢

### The True Meaning of 'Going Green'

at the core they are about giving back and reusing.

We have that same opportunity right now ... to recycle the love, experiences, and values we learned at Camp, when we help today's kids at Coniston. This is the foot to put forward in these difficult economic times ... and the fact of difficult times doesn't change a thing. There's still that 12 year old boy or girl who needs what we have to give. That child needs you to recycle too.

Will our kids today know they're "being recycled to?" No way, no more than I knew it on Nanny's porch. But what she gave was so important, and I know how valuable it's become as I've grown through my life.

That's the kind of recycling that Coniston needs right now ... truly "going green."

## Coniston Hosts Croydon Day 2009



## Mehgan Salvas & Brad Ship

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### Coniston in Real Life

As a classroom teacher, and a management consultant, Mehgan and Brad speak clearly to the value of their time at Coniston.

“After four years as a teacher, I’ve learned it’s important for kids to take risks in a safe place. And not just physical risks ... I mean speaking up at cabin time, performing a skit, sharing meals at the dinner table. Kids need to develop those skills comfortably and safely.”

For Brad, the biggest benefit was being a staff member.

“The ability at 17 to take on leadership, managing people, a first-year counselor having kids look up to you ... I know it sounds like a tremendous cliché, but it’s huge. I could put a good part of my salary directly to what I know from Camp.”



“Just after Mehgan got asked to be a leader on the CIT trip up to Mt. Washington.”

### An Easy Decision

It was a unique choice for Mehgan and Brad to donate their wedding favors to Coniston, but not a difficult one.

“We’re aware there are children who don’t have the financial resources to have the experience that Brad and I had. Times are stressful now ... but regardless of the economic situation, we have to give this support. Really, it’s priceless.”

“Air Guitar! An old Coniston Boy’s Camp tradition being kept up at our wedding.”



top/bottom: Croydon Flats and Croydon Village square off in the Great Intertown Tug of War.

left: Chicken’s on the grille! Coniston provides all the food for Croydon Day.

right: Smiling Croydon kids having a great time at Coniston.



## Town of Croydon gives Coniston its “Community Service Award” for 2009

On September 19th Camp Coniston continued a six-year tradition, inviting everyone in the town of Croydon to our semi-annual Croydon Day picnic.

A celebration since 2003, Croydon Day is Coniston’s thank-you to the people of our local town for hosting our Camp. All 600 residents, full time & summer, are invited for a day of good food, activities and lots of fun.

There’s a huge tug of war between Croydon Village and Croydon Flats, a big dinner cooked by the Fire Dept, and in the evening a fireworks display provided by Camp.

The activities of the Picnic are coordinated by a committee of townspeople, headed by Andrea Drew and Kim McKinney.

“We were very proud to accept the Community Service Award at the Town Picnic.” John Tilley said. “It’s very gratifying because local community members acknowledge our service to the youth of the town.”

Coniston also offers every Croydon child the opportunity to attend Camp, through our Campership program.

“It’s just another way for Coniston to give value to the community, in ways that touch people’s lives.”

# 2009 Memories...



## JD BRINGS US SOME SWEET THOUGHTS FROM SUMMER '09

You're driving to Camp, and at the exit off I-89, it begins... the realization that you're almost there! You turn onto Stoney Brook Road, the place where everyone gets that feeling in their stomach of eager anticipation ... ready to set foot on Coniston ground again.



### What a Blast!



Our time together goes by too fast, but the memories last for all of us! **Zach Friedman**, **Rachael Jennings** and the **Program LITs** created amazing evening programs for us this year. Each session had something fun and new to experience.

We had a blast with **X-Men Night**. Remember **Fuzzy Bear Night**, when it turned out to be a fake cover title for "**Coniston Crime Scene!**" The SORTING HAT that spoke to us in the dance studio for **Harry Potter Houses** was amazing. The incredible masks for **Where The Wild Things Are** that were identical to the book's. **Oregon Trail Night** had a specially-made wagon for the program skits down by the waterfront!

If you were here for **Battle Of The 80's Hair Bands**, with everyone sitting as groups in the dining hall singing a pop song for each rock group ... either Bon Jovi, Aerosmith, Kiss, or Def Leopard ... you should realize your parents are probably jealous that they weren't there too!

### Sweet Summer Memories

**John McNair**, Boys Camp Director and **Rachel Foley**, Girls Camp Director kept us happy and motivated. We learned from them that opening up about ourselves, problem-solving together, and being there for our friends is easier than we think ... it's a life-skill that helps everyone succeed!



Sunday mornings overlooking Cranberry Pond for chapel had so many special contributions from both campers and staff. Our four different chapel themes were: **Nature**, **Perseverance & Determination**, **Appreciation & Thankfulness**, and **Hope**. Thanks to everyone who told us personal stories and sang for everyone to enjoy and reflect upon... it takes confidence and courage to speak in front of 450 people! Camp is special and we experienced it together. Have a wonderful school year ... and **thanks for a fantastic 2009!**

JD





## Steve's Poem

A poem written by and read by 3rd year camper **Steve Lucas** this summer at chapel:

*Camp is my place.  
It's where I belong.  
While I'm at camp,  
Nothing is wrong.*

*Camp is so great,  
It's one of the best.  
When compared with others,  
It beats the rest.*

*You might ask,  
"What is so great about camp?"*

*Camp is a place of peace,  
a place of nature,  
a place of friendship,  
and a place to mature.*

*An escape from reality,  
A retreat from life,  
A place without war,  
Pain, or strife.*

*I was homesick yesterday.  
It was such a disgrace.  
But it couldn't let me down,  
For camp is my place.*



## Coniston History: A CONTINUING SERIES

**D**uring the 1970's, there was a time when the Common Loon was very close to extinction.

Loons are a remarkable bird whose ancestry goes back before written history, long before most birds even existed. They can dive up to 90 feet deep, and stay submerged for over 10 minutes hunting fish.

But in the early 70's, because of water pollution, the 900 lakes and ponds in New Hampshire hosted as few as 10 successful nesting pairs of loons. At this point, the loon was very close to becoming a listed Endangered Species.

But because Lake Coniston was so clean, and had been preserved in such great condition, we were an integral part of the loon's historic recovery. The healthy young that were raised here, and at other pristine lakes in New Hampshire, enabled the loon to become re-established in the northeast and across the United States.

## "Why is the Loon Coniston's Symbol?"

It was during this time that the loon became Coniston's symbol. Today, by preserving Camp's environment, we continue to protect the loon — as our mascot, and for our future.

The loon is also a wonderful symbol for life at Coniston ... just as the loon can raise its young here, in a safe and nurturing place, our young people can learn and grow, and then leave to pursue their own lives, and to teach others what they learned here at Camp. —





The  
Happiest  
of  
Holidays

... from all  
your good friends  
at Camp Coniston!



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