



# THE CONISTON CHRONICLE

THE NEWSLETTER FOR CAMP CONISTON CAMPERS, STAFF AND ALUMNI • WINTER 2005-6

## 22 House Lots Overlooking Coniston Up For Development

The news is out—in August a developer made an offer on the only parcel overlooking Lake Coniston that is not owned by Camp. The seller advertised the property for 22 house lots, and has entertained offers from various purchasers. While many of you know we own all the land around the lake, there is one remaining area, privately owned, less than 800 feet from the shore.

Camp heard about the potential sale in late summer and immediately began work. Thanks to quick action by Coniston's board of directors and management, we have negotiated a potential purchase of this property, protecting Coniston for the future. The Board has been working on funding and has been able to secure a substantial portion of the developer's asking price. But we have farther to go, and much more work to do, before we can protect this important piece of Coniston's tradition.

Most of us remember seeing camp for the first time. It is like peering into the edge of a beautiful wilderness, knowing that it is there for all of us to enjoy. Many individuals have worked very hard over the years to protect the property around Coniston from development, to preserve what is most valuable to our campers parents and alumni—the natural and scenic beauty of Camp, and the feeling of peace, tranquility and seclusion that comes with it.

In 1963, the leadership of our YMCA decided to move here for precisely this reason—camp was located on Rand's Pond, about ten miles from our present site, and the pond was becoming increasingly developed. Camp



The property is located between Main Camp and the Gazebo, and is visible from this location.

management had to ask neighbors to maintain quiet because campers were there, and to be careful of what they were doing because campers could be watching ... these concerns appear in the Board minutes of the day.

In the 1960's the YMCA was able to secure over \$250,000 to move Camp to its present location. In the 1970's, we came a bit closer to our dream when the hill directly behind Boy's Camp was donated—over 240 acres. Several other pieces have been purchased and donated over time by many who believed in our Camp's mission to complete our property.

“Neighbors and vacationers kept walking through the camp, sometimes late at night, and the directors knew that kids were watching and listening. So the Board decided to move the camp to what is now Coniston. If we can purchase this property, we would finally finish what they started in 1963.”

John Tilley

continued on pg 2



## THE CONISTON CHRONICLE

A Publication of  
YMCA CAMP CONISTON  
for Campers, Alumni  
and Staff

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John Tilley  
Executive Director

Jennifer Deasy  
Assistant Director

Lorraine Newcomb  
Registrar

Jane Amey  
After School/  
Adventure Coordinator

Aaron Turner  
Maintenance Director

Dave Savio  
Gene Lee  
Maintenance

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## Development cont'd from pg 1

This event has come at a fortunate time. Financially we have never been so healthy. Alumni and staff are supporting our Camp like never before. The land is for sale and available ... and finally, the acquisition of this parcel would complete the dream begun in 1963 of total security for YMCA Camp Coniston.

The parcel that is for sale is *the only piece left in our valley* that we have not preserved. It is so important for us to finish protecting what is most valuable to our campers, staff and alumni—the peaceful seclusion that Coniston offers to us all. —

This is a unique opportunity for all of us in the Coniston community to complete our dream—to protect and preserve the unique character of Camp that is so special to us all. In the coming weeks you will receive more information about this important event. But in the meantime, if you'd like to find out what you can do, please contact John Tilley at (603) 863-1160, or email us at [info@coniston.org](mailto:info@coniston.org). We'd be happy to give you more information, and let you know how you can help. —

## STAFF MEMBER FOCUS:

# Sean Crotty

Water Ski Director, Springboro, Ohio

We know that Camp is special to all of us—but for some people, Camp is special enough to give up a career in law to become a camp director! That's exactly what happened to Sean Crotty, our Water Ski Director this past summer.

Sean got his first taste of camp life at YMCA Camp Kern. Three summers ago, he was a cabin counselor with firm plans to go to law school ... but after his first summer at camp, he decided to make a real change in careers and become a camp director.

"Camp Kern's director, Jeff Merhige, became my mentor, and he really helped me decide on a career at Camp." Sean worked as a cabin counselor

that first summer, then became Village Director for boys ages 7-9. He came to Coniston on Jeff's advice—"it was a big decision for me to change my career, and I didn't want to base my decision on only one camp. I asked Jeff if there was any place I could learn and grow in my new career, and he said yes—Camp Coniston!"

Sean smiles when he remembers his friends' reaction to his career change—"They all said, 'Sean, like, what's the point?'," but unless you've worked at a camp like Coniston, you really can't understand how cool and special it is. I feel very privileged—I don't know many jobs where, in such a short time, you can have such an impact on people's lives."



IT'S NEVER DULL AT MEALTIME!  
SEAN IN THE DINING HALL WITH  
"THE BOYS FROM BI"

# Coniston History: A CONTINUING SERIES

## In This Issue:

### "How Camp Coniston Got Its Name"

**H**ow about this for an interesting bit of history—in 1906, the best-selling novel in America was called “Coniston”, written by Winston Churchill!

In the early 1900’s the close-by town of Cornish NH was home to a famous artist’s colony. The well-known painter Maxfield Parrish lived there, as did the sculptor St. Gaudens, who sculpted the monument in front of the Massachusetts State House ... and the most famous writer in residence was an author by the name of Winston Churchill (no relation to the British prime minister). Woodrow Wilson used Churchill’s house during the summers of his presidency, and he was President Theodore Roosevelt’s favorite writer. In fact, when Roosevelt visited Cornish to ask St. Gaudens to design the Liberty Dollar coin, his real purpose was supposedly to meet Churchill—“Coniston” was his favorite book!

Churchill’s novel was about corruption in the railroad industry and was very important.

It helped start the progressive movement which ended a lot of corruption in the US. The book was so popular that even though it was set in the town of Croydon, NH, people began referring to the town as “Coniston”, and even named the Coniston General Store after the novel!

Now let’s jump ahead a bit. In the early 1940’s, NH had so many lakes called Long Pond that the state sent letters to the owners, requesting they change the name of their lakes to something less confusing! In 1943, the Dudley family who owned Camp Interlaken, (see last issue’s *Coniston History*) changed the name of Long Pond in Croydon to Lake Coniston—named

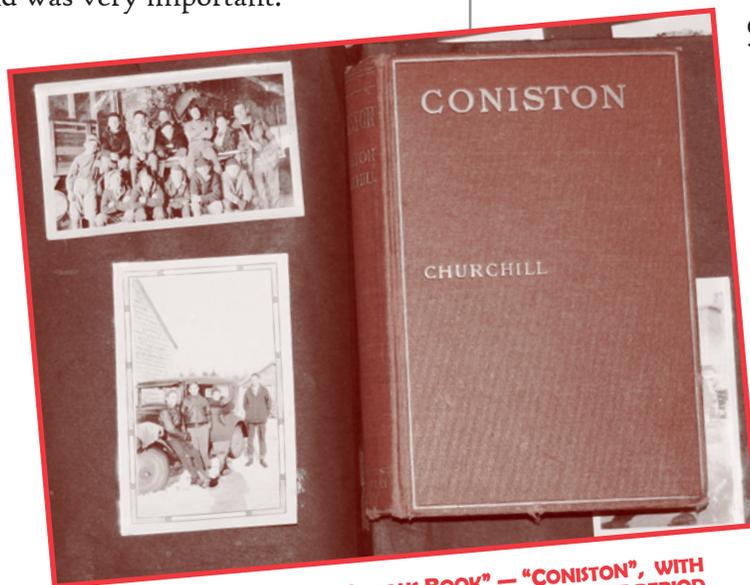
after Charles Dudley Sr’s favorite book! (Many people think the lake’s name was changed by the camp, but the camp was actually named after the lake.)

When the YMCA bought our current property in 1963, to move Camp Soangetaha from Rand’s Pond to Lake Coniston, they wanted to change the camp’s name for a very good reason—upon seeing the name, few could pronounce it and even fewer could spell it! The Camp actually went without a name from 1964 to 1967—it was legally called “The New New Hampshire YMCA Camping Reservation for Boys and Girls”, but that was so clumsy we still have notes of complaint from people who couldn’t fit it on their checks!

So, in 1967, after a long search, our Camp was named Coniston for the first time. Many names were considered and rejected—“Camp Dorr”, after George Dorr, our chairman of the board; “Camp George Williams”, named after an early YMCA pioneer; “Long Pond YMCA Camp”; “YMCA Camp Wilderness”, and “YMCA Camp Timberlake”, which has since been taken! As late as 1969, a group of former staff members and alumni tried to change the name back to Soangetaha—but today, the name remains the Coniston we know and love. —↵

## Next Issue:

“How the Loon Became Coniston’s Mascot”



“THE FAMOUS BOOK” — “CONISTON”, WITH SOME PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE PERIOD

## STAFF MEMBER FOCUS:

*continued from pg 2*

Sean is taking his new career very seriously—after graduating college in December, he’s off to the National Outdoor Leadership School in Patagonia, Chile. Although NOLS has branches all over the world, he chose this one to learn the most, and put himself in the most challenging environment. He’ll get his “Wilderness First Responder” and “Leave No Trace” certifications, after leading a two-week expedition into the mountains of Chile as his final exam.

Sean says that, “In the future, when I become a camp director, I want my camp to run as smoothly as Camp Coniston. The program development is solid, the schedule works great, and there’s such a sense of warmth here, a feeling of community and tradition, family and comfort—everything just clicks!” —↵

# Adventure Camp:

## A SPECTACULAR SEASON!

“What a huge team-building adventure!” That’s the way director Bart Gage felt about this summer’s Adventure Camp expeditions at Camp Coniston. “Such a close-knit group—you live, sleep, breathe with these people 24 hours a day—it totally fuels the entire trip!”

Adventure Camp is a full week of outdoor excitement, an assortment of trips all over New England with the focus on ... adventure! “We start with a team-building experience like hiking Mount Mansfield or Kahtadin”, Bart says. “It sets the tone for the entire trip, it really psychs everyone up and sets up the group for coming together ...



**A MAN ON THE MOVE! BART GAGE HEADS OUT FROM CONISTON FOR ANOTHER AMAZING ADVENTURE CAMP TRIP**

and it gives the kids such confidence.” Bart said one of the best moments this summer was watching a young camper jump into a mountain pool. “She was timidly standing at the edge, and finally she jumped off into the mountain water ... to receive her first “outdoor standing ovation” by everyone present! What a huge accomplishment for her!”

Bart said this summer’s Green Mountain Explorer was an

example of the “perfect Adventure

Camp trip.” The adventure started with a journey to Underhill State Park for a special birthday celebration, then to Mount Mansfield for the group’s first big hike. The next day was rock-climbing at a massive granite boulder outside

Rutland, VT, then to a nearby state park for mountain biking. The group then swooped down to Greenfield, MA for whitewater rafting through Zoar’s Gap on the Greenfield River, then to the spectacular Natural Bridge, a natural carving created by a river in North Adams, MA, and then finally back up to Bromley Mountain near Manchester, VT for a day of mountain sliding “... and that’s all within one week! What an awesome trip!”



**AN INCREDIBLE TEAM—ADVENTURE CAMP DIRECTORS BART GAGE, AND WENDY BAKER FROM PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, CANADA**

Bart spoke of the ideal Adventure Camper as “a kid that’s totally into adventure ... but it’s especially valuable for kids that need to be pushed a bit, who have never had this kind of experience. It’s the mix of both that brings out the best in everyone—big kids mentoring little kids, older kids that take the next step into becoming leaders themselves—and the best part is watching everyone grow, and come together to work as a team.”

Adventure Camp has been steadily growing in popularity—in fact, the past two summers were the first where Adventure Camp was totally full. When asked for his best advice to future Adventure Campers, Bart smiled and said, “Register early!!” —

## Camp News:

**Kids:  
Be Sure  
Your  
Parents  
Read  
This!!**



**H**ere are the answers to the most commonly asked questions after registration. If you need help, feel free to call me at the office. We are here Monday through Friday year round.  
—Lorraine Newcomb, Registrar

1. *Cancellation Policy*—all cancellations received by January 1st will receive a refund of 1/2 of their deposit. Cancellations after that date receive no refund.

2. *Camp Forms*—watch your mailbox at the end of February for your camp forms, which will include your Activity Sign-up sheet, your letter to your Cabin Leader, and your Health Form. All paperwork, including the Health Form, will be due back at Camp by May 1st.
3. *Physicals*—by NH state law, every camper must have a physical dated within 24 months prior to the session he/she is attending. For example, for Session 1 campers, any physical dated before June 25, 2004 will not be accepted.
4. *Wait List*—every year, Camp takes

almost 100 campers off its Wait List due to schedule changes. We encourage people to get onto our Wait List—it’s a great way to get into Camp!

5. *Adventure Camp*—if you’re interested in extending your summer at Coniston and you’re over 12 years of age, we still have a few openings in most Adventure Camp trips. If you’d like to add an Adventure Camp trip to your summer and you’ve already registered at Camp, it’s easy. Just call Lorraine at the Camp Office at (603) 863-1160—no additional paperwork needed!

# Summer 2005!!

What a great summer 2005 was! The energy started high and continued all the way through 4th Session and Family Camp! The summer staff had a cohesiveness that was like no other year, and their collective ideas and energy to create fun and exciting activities helped continue our high standards for a great camper experience! In the summer we have an amazing family atmosphere where campers energize the staff, and the staff circle it around to energize the campers! We are so lucky to have a high return rate of staff and campers so every check-in is exciting when we reconnect—but on the same note, every check-out is sad when we have to say good-bye for another year. Those feelings of friendship and love are what camp is all about and why we all want to come back year after year!

This fall I got the chance to reconnect with an old friend and fellow camp instructor ... a 22-year Conistonian ... COCHISE! Yes, the horse who has the longest camp history and retired in 2004 was honored with runner-up HORSE OF THE YEAR after Horseback Director Nicole

Smith and many campers wrote letters in nomination of him. Because of his winning status, he was asked to be a 'Celebrity Horse' at the Equine Affaire in the youth pavilion in Springfield, MA last month. Like so many staff who taught campers how to do something new at camp, Cochise is in many hearts as the first horse or favorite horse that many alumni ever rode! I love the sentimental part of camp—caring for people, animals and memories!

Thought that you may have fun taking the camp quiz below ... I think some things will make you giggle—like how many grilled cheese we all eat in one summer!

Happy Holidays! We'll see you in 2006! —

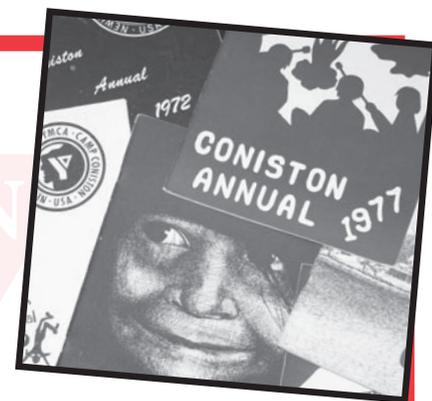


HORSIN' AROUND—  
JD AND COCHISE

## CAMP QUIZ!!!

We all pride ourselves on being "fans of Camp". We know the names of our friends and our counselors, the buildings and the campsites, and the many people on the camp staff.

But how many of you know what year the first Coniston Calendar was created? Or where the deepest point in the lake is, and how deep? Here's your chance to show off your knowledge of Camp — presenting Camp Coniston's first-ever Camp Quiz! (The answers are on page 6 ... but don't peek!)



1. How many grilled cheese were served last summer?
2. What year was the first Coniston Calendar created?
3. How many toilets are there at camp?
4. How many evening programs did we have?
5. How many total campers were at camp?
6. How tall is the climbing tower?
7. Where is the deepest point in the lake? How deep?
8. How many people climbed Mt. Washington?
9. How many people hiked to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and out again?
10. How many cabin counselors do we have?
11. Which division had it's own song?
12. What '05 horse has been at camp the longest, and how many years?
13. How many camper cabins are there?
14. How many sweatshirts were sold?
15. How many campers took arts & crafts session 4?
16. How many campers took waterskiing each session?
17. How many overnight spots are there? Can you name them?
18. Which staff has been here the longest, and how many summers?
19. Who has been here the next longest?
20. How many memories were made?

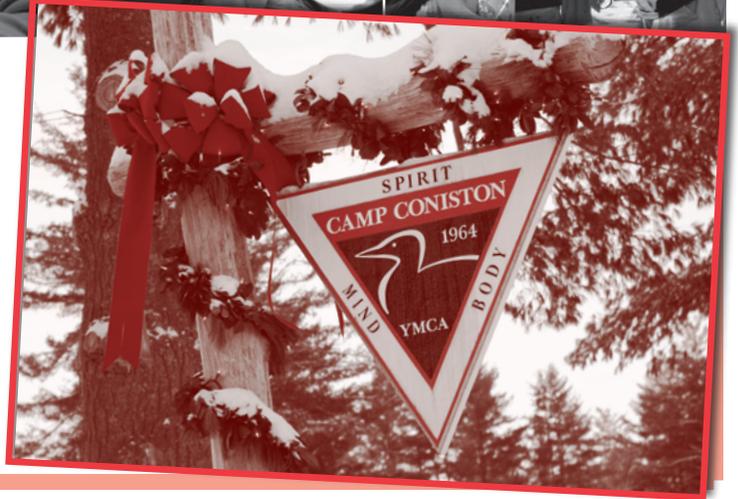
(Quiz answers on page 6!!)

# CAMP PHOTOS!!!



# Happy Holidays

**FROM ALL OF US AT CAMP!!!!**



Camp Quiz Answers: 1. 11,200 (1400 each time we have it) 2. 1992 3. 66 4. 52 (13 each session) 5. 1198 6. 20ft to the platform 7. 33ft in second lake just past the channel on the left 8. 50 (40 CITs and 10 Leaders) 9. 19 (15 CITs and 4 Leaders) 10. 73 (30 boys staff, 43 girls staff) 11. Juniors 12. Fitcha—15 years 13. 32 (17 girls, 12 boys, 3 CIT) 14. 525 15. 204 16. 72 17. 9—Boys Learn-To, Gazebo, Boys Cabin, Flume, Generals Grove, Penny Koyal, Loom, Irigger, Sugar Hill 18. Sue Strelbel, camp nurse, 17 summers! 19. Eben Gannett—13 years! 20. Countless!

**KIDS:**  
Important news  
for your parents  
on Page One

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
WARNER, NH  
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**YMCA Camp Coniston**  
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