



# THE CONISTON CHRONICLE

THE NEWSLETTER FOR CAMP CONISTON CAMPERS, STAFF AND ALUMNI • FALL/WINTER 2006

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

### "This Body Climbed Mt. Washington ..." and inspired an entire camp

**MARCUS STACY**  
BOSTON, MA. • DRAMA CO-DIRECTOR

John Tilley recently remarked that he clearly remembers his first meeting with Marcus Stacy, when he came to Camp in a wheelchair. In 2000 when Marcus won Honor Camper, John turned to Robert Kelly, the Boys Camp director, and said, "We've gotta figure a way to get this guy up Washington!"

It's obvious that Marcus has become a valued member of the Coniston community — first as a camper, then as a CIT, then LIT, and finally as Camp Coniston's Drama co-director. Of course, one of the most important CIT rituals is the traditional climb up Mt Washington, the highest mountain in the northeast. As a CIT candidate, Marcus was determined to make that climb.

"I didn't really know what I was getting into," Marcus said, "but I knew that, one way or another, I wanted to make that Washington climb that year." Marcus had some valuable help ... his future co-director in the Drama department, Max



TRUE "SUPERHEROES" ... CHRIS CROSS AND MAX ROSEN,  
MARCUS' CO-DIRECTORS IN THE DRAMA DEPARTMENT

SUCCESS!! MARCUS  
WEARING THE SHIRT  
(AND THE SMILE!)  
THAT CELEBRATES  
HIS MOUNT  
WASHINGTON  
CLIMB



Rosen, along with Sarah Buttor-Foederl, an alumni who flew in from Colorado, and Dan Vogt, Coniston staff member, agreed to assist him in the climb.

With research help from the Special Needs

Group at the University of NH, the year-round Coniston staff discovered a wheelchair designed for hiking. "It's a huge piece of machinery with three thick tires, a cab to sit in, and handlebars front and back to lift over big rocks ... we called it 'the Rambo Chair'!" Their goal was Hermit's Shelter at Tuckerman's Ravine, nine long uphill miles from the base camp.

## A TOUGH CLIMB

They started the climb early in the morning. "It was rough going, slow and cumbersome getting the wheelchair over the big rocks, but I wanted to do as much of the climb as I could on my own." Marcus's team helped him over the worst spots but when they reached the intersection with the next trail, they saw a much steeper and rockier path "... it looked like it went straight up! I turned to my friends and said, 'What do we do now?'" They decided to press on, using the wheelchair when they could and "crutching it" over the bigger

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CAMP CONISTON

1911

YMCA

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## THE CONISTON CHRONICLE

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

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# Director's 2c



## Cost of Coniston Defies the National Trend

We all know that Camp Coniston has some incredibly dedicated

staffers working for us every summer. We all work so hard to give our campers a rich experience they can bring home with them each season, full of education, accomplishment, personal growth ... and most of all, plenty of fun!

But it's also very gratifying to find out that, along with our high-quality camping experience, we represent one of the *best camp values* anywhere in the United States.

The American Camp Association, of which Camp Coniston is a member, recently published their "Business Operations Survey" which included a study of prices in 2005 for camping

experiences in the U.S.

Here's what they said: the median price for a one-week stay was \$780.00 ... and Camp Coniston was at \$485, almost 38 percent below the median price!

ACA also discovered that, according to third-party research, more than 42% of all private camps in the United States cost more than \$1,000 per week.

We're very proud that we can bring such a high-quality camping experience to Coniston campers every year, and are able to do it at such a competitive cost. This means that more people, from all walks of life, can afford to join us each summer, for an experience they'll carry with them for the rest of their lives.

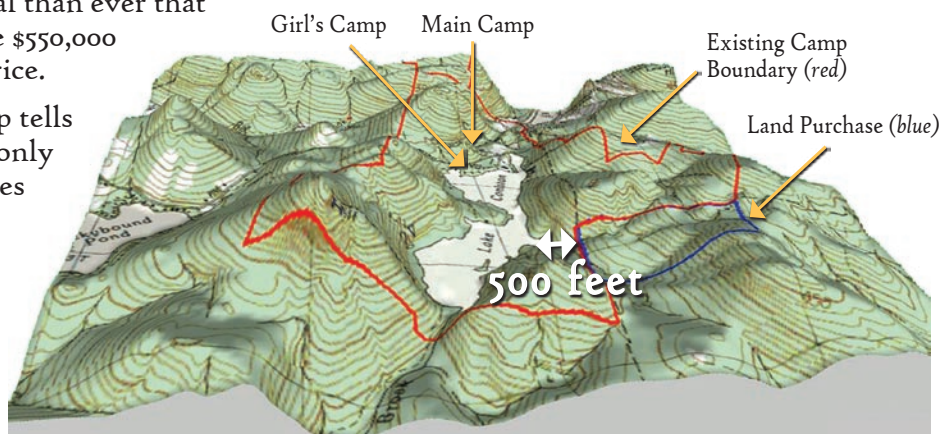
We all know what Camp means to us ... how important the experience is, and how much we look forward to it every summer. It's the dedication of our staff, our campers, and our alumni that make that experience possible ... now and for years into the future. Thanks to all of our friends ... see you next summer! —

As many of you know, we have been working very hard to secure the 130-acre parcel recently opened for development next to Camp Coniston. Many of our friends have contacted us asking, "How can I help?" We're glad to report we've secured over \$200,000 from your generous pledges. But to avoid the heavy load of financing expenses on the property, it's more critical than ever that we raise the \$550,000 purchase price.

The 3D map tells the story—only 500' separates the property from the shore of Lake Coniston.

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## LAND PURCHASE UPDATE





## STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

### Marcus Stacy ... continued from page 1

rocks. As the day progressed the weather steadily worsened, as a giant thunderstorm rolled in and the sky darkened. Marcus finally decided the trail was too rugged to use the wheelchair. They made the decision to leave the chair in the trailside bushes, and Marcus continued the climb using his crutches.

But the pace was slow, and Max Rosen was becoming concerned about the time. "Max calculated we'd reach Hermit's Shelter at 11 pm ... that would mean at least three hours hiking on this rough trail in the dark! I remember thinking, 'what am I doing? Is there any point in finishing this?' I took Max aside and said, 'I really don't know if this is worth it.'" But through the spirit of Camp and the hike, Marcus decided to keep going. "I've never been a quitter," he smiled.

Marcus and his team made it to Hermit's Shelter earlier than they expected, by 8 pm, just as the sun was setting and his rescuers were turning back to search for him. They celebrated that night ... the first person to make it up Tuckerman's Ravine using a wheelchair! Marcus describes the climb as "a defining moment", and the next day, he ran into Lake Coniston with his fellow CITs in the traditional celebration of the Washington climb.

## DRAMATIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Marcus describes the Coniston Drama program as one of the most rewarding experiences of his life. Marcus, Chris and Max were all in the same CIT group in 2001, and they discovered they had a similar interest in drama. "We decided to take the Drama Department to another level," Marcus said, and he credits Camp support as a big part of their success.

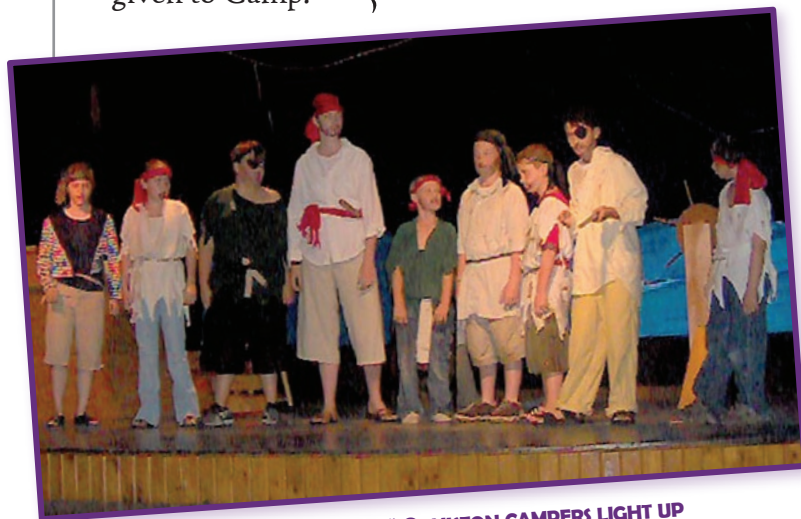
"We wanted to challenge

**"IMAGINE A BUNCH  
OF 16-YEAR-OLD  
KIDS HELPING THEIR  
FRIEND GET TO  
TUCKERMAN'S ...  
IN A WHEELCHAIR!"**

these kids by adding more to the program, defining high expectations but knowing they'd have our support and encouragement. The kids were right with us on the journey, and Camp has been incredibly good to us. They bought equipment, they added lighting ... they made it possible to make this program what it is today."

Marcus and his team have pulled off impressive dramatic feats, including a full scale three-act production of *Treasure Island*. "We just thought it would be incredibly fun ... and it was! Chris wrote the script and did the sets and lighting, Max composed the music, and I acted as director/producer ... but we trade off roles in the productions." They did the same for *Tuck Everlasting*, based on the popular novel and Disney film, and that's only part of the Drama department's work ... along with talented Coniston campers, they create and produce four productions each summer.

Marcus says that Camp Coniston is one of the best influences in his life. "There will come a time when we will have to leave Camp in some way, eventually, and we want to carry what we've learned into our lives." John Tilley agrees ... he said of Marcus, "Camp certainly gave to him — and he's truly given to Camp." —*JS*



**"... AND ACTION!" CONISTON CAMPERS LIGHT UP THE STAGE DURING DRAMA DEPT PRODUCTIONS**



**YEEOW!  
MARCUS  
IMMERSED  
IN DRAMA  
AT CAMP  
CONISTON!**



# The Summer!



## JD looks back at a wonderful season

**T**he campers have all gone home, but family campers and school groups have been keeping Camp active. They all ask, "How was your summer, did the rain affect the camp?" In my head I respond ... WHAT RAIN?!

Well ... yes, thinking back, we did have some rain, but with our amazing counselors, and all the campers that are so happy to be here ... a little rain didn't dampen things at all! We were able to put to good use our amazing renovations in the old dining hall, now called New Hampshire Hall. With new hardwood floors and inside décor, this multipurpose space was perfect for activities such as MTV Night, Bio-Suit/Adaptation Sunday, Rick Ellis Night, Division Night Programs ... and, of course, Mr. & Mrs. YMCA!



### Reminiscing on the summer ...

I love check-in days, always full of smiling campers, who have eagerly waited for their session date, to move in and share lots of hugs with old friends and counselors that have been greatly missed over the year. The parents and grandparents who are witness to this all ask me and John Tilley... "Can't you have a camp for adults too?" I know the feeling! It's refreshing for parents to know that their child is having such a positive experience in their life ... one that will give each son and daughter memories and life lessons that will be with them forever.

I cannot boast enough about the summer staff.

We just can't go wrong with the amazing team of staffers that come back year after year. We were fortunate to have John McNair, Emmy Watson, Gen Izutsu and Max Rosen all return to

Senior Staff Leadership ... and if the stars are aligned, we may have a repeat performance in 2007! We have cabin counselors like Ben Mark who plan to return, and have asked to move only a couple cabins higher so that they can 'follow their campers' and stick with them year after year.



### We love camp!

Camp is great because we have Girls Camp Staff like Meredith Astles (G-8). She has amazing energy for her campers and can juggle any added responsibility sent her way. Thanks to all the staff parents who give their children to us for 9+ weeks each summer ... camp is better because of them!

With a whole lake at our disposal and 1200+ acres of land, we all enjoy activities from snorkeling and kayaking to horseback riding, woodshop and a 9-hole disc golf course. There was so much singing and dancing before and after meals in the dining hall that hearing those songs on the radio make us all long for those camp days together!

Summer 2006 went by too quickly, but now it's time to plan 2007 ... and when I think back, will I remember the rain??? Every day was sunshine to me! —JD



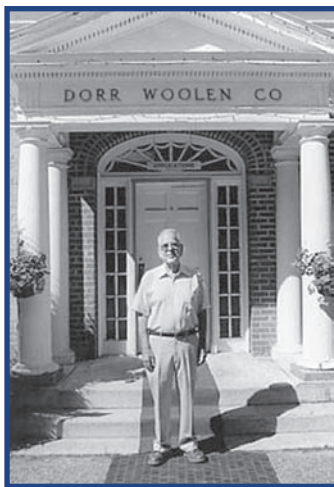


In Memoriam:  
**George Dorr**

**W**hen we look back at the long life and many contributions of George A. Dorr Jr., we couldn't fail to describe him as a "true Friend of Coniston," and we were saddened by his passing this spring. Former president of Dorr Woolen Mills in Newport NH, and former Chairman of the Board of Camp Coniston, George was a true statesman (he went overseas numerous times as an adviser to the US State Department), a dedicated member of his community, and a tireless supporter of Camp Coniston.

George was instrumental in moving Camp to its present site in 1964, to gain more safety and seclusion for Coniston campers (at the same time, he was helping to negotiate the GATT treaty for the United States!) If George were alive today, we're sure he would be pleased to see Camp Coniston expanding and securing our site ... and we know he'd be an active contributor to our efforts.

We remember with pride and deep appreciation George's steady guidance and wise leadership. In his honor, we're re-running the following story from the *Coniston Chronicle* Winter '05 issue. The thought of George trudging through the snow to help find our new location is a perfect image for his dedication to our Camp ... we remember you well, George.



**GEORGE A. DORR JR. AT THE  
ENTRANCE TO DORR WOOLEN  
MILLS IN NEWPORT NH**

**I**n the late 1950's and early 1960's, the YMCA was actively involved in the search for a new location for what would eventually become Camp Coniston. At the time, George Dorr of Dorr Woolen Mills in Newport NH was the chairman of the Board. He had his pilot's license, and with other board members, spent countless hours flying around western New Hampshire looking for possible lake sites.

One of the locations they spotted in their travels was Eastman Lake in Grantham NH. To get a closer look, they drove out to the lake for an on-site inspection. However, this trip was complicated by the fact that it was the middle of a cold and snowy New Hampshire winter. That didn't slow them down ... the gentlemen strapped on their snowshoes and headed off into the snowy woods to survey the lake and surrounding land.

Unfortunately, their journey came to an abrupt halt when one of the party's snowshoes broke, and as anyone who has snowshoed through a NH winter can tell you, that really slows things down. The party turned back, making their way as best they could while night began to fall ... the cars seemed miles away as they struggled through the dark and the drifts ... and all the while their families waited at home, wondering how a simple trip could have taken them so long!

It was well after dark when they finally returned home, and after warming up, they decided that perhaps Eastman Lake wasn't the place they were looking for after all! So the search continued for a new location for Camp Coniston ... ~~~~~

**LAND  
PURCHASE  
UPDATE**

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With the potential for 22 house lots, many of which will be visible from Camp, the need is clear to secure this parcel for Coniston's future.

We have talked about the many benefits this land represents to Camp Coniston ... a buffer against development, increased security and seclusion for Camp, the possibilities for program expansion.

But there are very important environmental benefits as well. If we can secure this purchase, we will be one of the very few watersheds in the entire New England region which will be almost completely protected—we will own over 95% of the entire watershed for our lake!

The benefits are huge: the creation of a connected "green space" protecting fish and wildlife, the opportunity for environmental study and recreation for local schools and groups ... and the knowledge that we have forever protected this beautiful land for generations into the future.

We are asking camper families to consider a \$100 donation for each year of involvement with Coniston. Can you please help us with a generous gift? Together, we can make the dream a reality. ~~~~~





# Camp Winning Spirit

## A Lifeline for Kids and Parents Who Need It Most

Every fall, a diverse group of campers gathers at Camp Coniston for a week of fellowship, ideas and a sharing of knowledge and experience ... a special kind of support that they find they can get nowhere else.

These campers are participating in Camp Winning Spirit, a group camp for kids with childhood cancer and their families. Since 1996, Camp Coniston has hosted Winning Spirit for any NH family who has experienced childhood cancer, at no cost to them. Your contributions to the Camp Coniston Annual Fund help support this program every year, as well as additional assistance from the Irene and Hugh Gallen Memorial Trust.

Camp Winning Spirit started through a chance meeting in Sylvia Pelletier's kitchen. The director of NH's Childhood Cancer Lifeline, Sylvia had just founded the organization when her neighbor stopped in. "I always thought of a family camp, and it turned out my neighbor knew the head of the NH YMCA." Camp Coniston hosted the first CWS session in 1996, and we have been honored to run Camp Winning Spirit every year since.

Sylvia says the most important value of Winning Spirit is the ability for newly-diagnosed families

to interact with survivors. "Cancer is a journey for these families, and the challenges for young children and teens are enormous. Survivors are of immense value to new families because they understand the effects of treatment, the challenges to the family, the aftermath of accompanying illnesses and psycho-social issues."

"When my children were dealing with cancer, I would have given anything to meet someone with a healthy beautiful daughter who was diagnosed as a child. That's why Camp Winning Spirit accepts any family who has experienced childhood cancer. The emotional support, the factual exchange of knowledge, sharing information about the day-to-day ... what *works* for your child. That's the capstone of Camp Winning Spirit."

Sylvia said she understood completely when a young newly-diagnosed family member stood up at the campfire and said, "This is the one place I feel like I belong ... now I know I'm not alone." —S



**SUPPORT, KNOWLEDGE, AND COMPANIONSHIP FROM SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE ... THAT'S THE CRUCIAL VALUE OF CAMP WINNING SPIRIT**





As you look at these pictures and read this newsletter, realize that Coniston is successful due to the efforts of many individuals, over many years. This newsletter is a tribute to those whose gifts of talent and treasure have made Camp what it is today. It is also a reminder that it is now our turn to take up their call to action, to make certain that we in the Coniston community provide for future generations.

We are closing in on our goal for the land campaign, and we will celebrate the successful conclusion in the Spring Newsletter. At that time we will recognize the people who made it possible. In the meantime, enjoy the efforts put forth here, and rest assured that tomorrow is another Coniston day.

John Tilley  
Executive Director  
October 25, 2006



# GET ONLINE WITH US NOW!

## Join Us on the "Camp Coniston On-line Family Tree" ... You Never Know Who You'll Find!



The on-line Family Tree is up and running at [www.Coniston.org](http://www.Coniston.org). Just a few weeks in, and hundreds of alumni are already registering ... we hope that you will register too. This will link you to lost friends from your years in camp, as well as the provide the ability to find people by their school or hometown.

We know that many of you keep in touch with friends from camp that camp has lost track of. Please send them the link too. The more complete the list becomes, the more amazing it will be, and those friends will link back together with camp.

Together we will be able to rebuild past staffs and cabin groups, and recreate the community you have enjoyed in summers past. So go to [www.Coniston.org](http://www.Coniston.org) now and find out how you can "join the family."

parents:  
please see our  
important land  
purchase update on pg 3

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