

Thirty thousand years ago the spot where this dining hall sits was under at least a mile of ice. Thirty thousand years ago, in the grand scheme of things is nothing. There is little evidence of this ice here now but 60 miles west of here in Killarney Provincial Park you can see scrape marks all over the place where the ice ground boulders against the bedrock. Even at the top of the highest point in the park you can see these scrape marks. Think of it, the ice is so recent you can still see some of the mess it made.

After the ice melted, it probably took a few thousand years for the forest to grow and for big game to come in here. The Indians followed the game and things stayed that way for maybe 10,000 years. Then the white guys showed up and they cut down almost all of the trees and they came damn close to killing all of the Indians too. This was about 1800 - just over 200 years ago. They built a railroad to haul out the trees and in 1917 during WW I that railroad - the one that ran right here along the Lake - was the busiest in Canada. There was a train every 20 minutes. Imagine that. A noisy, smelly train going by every 20 minutes night and day. How did anyone manage to sleep through that? A lot of the Canadian guys from the prairies who went to be killed in France in WW-I got there by going along Source Lake. The bear that inspired Winnie the Pooh was brought from Winnipeg to London by a Canadian trooper. That bear almost certainly went over the bridge over the Madawaska on an eastbound train.

Until 1959 that was how you got to camp - by train. Then the trestle on Cache became unsafe and the line was shut down. The steel was taken up and many of the ties came over here to shore up the pathways. The candy store made it over here too, somehow. If you want a neat look into what the park looked like when they built the railway, take the Tower and Trestle hike just east on 60 and bring the guide book. At one point on the trail you're standing where a photo was taken in 1925. It's hard to believe how the forest has changed since then (and its hard to believe how destructive they were when they built the railway.)

I was 9 in 1961 when I first set foot on CPI. I was a young Chipp staying in lodge IIE. My counselor was John Sindelka. I was one of the first if not the first campers to stay only half season. Lodge IIE looks almost exactly the same now as it did then - 47 years ago. There have been a few changes to the way the bunks are laid out. But I think the nails outside on the south wall used to hang towels and suits are probably the same nails that we used in 1961.

1961 was Chief Norton's last summer running the camp. Roy and Swift took over on 1962. Sometime in the late 60's Roy's cabin burned down during a dinnertime thunderstorm. Lightning had ignited the creosote coating and it went up like a torch. Now Glenn's new cabin is there. The dollhouse is new. So is the new cabin near the ball field. The Rec lodge now has a beautiful new floor and electric lights. Right. Now there is electricity. In 1961 there was none. In 1962 Roy and Swift started using generated power. Line power didn't arrive until the mid 90's.

In 1961, we weren't allowed to walk through Stalker Park for fear of trampling the trees. They were planted in about 1959. Now they are big enough to crush things when they

fall. In the mid 70's it was rare to see or hear a loon in the park. DDT had nearly wiped them out. We used to use DDT powder right here on the island to keep the skeets down. Then DDT was banned and now there are loons all over the place. They've become pests, keeping us up at night.

On July 20, 1969 I was at Kiosk on a second set trip with Gyro when we found out that two guys had landed on the moon. Mac Rand and George Hubbard were campers on that trip. Now Mac is an owner emeritus and George has a son serving in Iraq.

There have been changes here since 1961 - lots of them. The bug house is gone. Lodge I no longer houses Mics. The storage area for the bikes under Lodge I in July of 1961 was full of ice. Big beautiful clear blocks of ice, buried in sawdust. Fred Lamke had cut them out from the lake in the winter of 1960-61 and there they were in July for me to be amazed at. (For those of you wondering what the ice was use for - it was the only source of refrigeration in the kitchen until 1962.) There are no more rowboats now - mostly because Norm Roggow - Bob's father - is no longer around to maintain them. Norm taught me to swim in the early days of July that year.

The Forest Five is gone. The guys that owned it were from the 40's and 50's and they didn't want to pay the lease fee so the Park burned it down. I spent a lot of time at the 5 - with Mac, the Coakleys, the Hurleys, with Lance and occasionally with girls from Wap or Northway. Paddling back from the 5 on a clear night was sometimes a beautiful and occasionally a terrifying adventure. I loved the 5.

There is one thing I would miss if was a camper here again - back in the 60's and 70's Lance often used to lead the hall in song after dinner. We often did this when it was raining. We sang old-fashioned songs and we sang some songs that were not very PC. When Roy's cabin was on fire, Lance kept the whole camp singing while the rest of the staff watched helplessly as the cabin was incinerated. I think some of the kids were comforted by that. It was probably a little scary knowing that there was a fire - even Lance didn't know what the extent of it was until it was over and we came to tell him and the campers.

Physically the camp today would be easily recognizable by Chief Norton but many of the little details have changed. We don't do the Indian thing any more. No one knows what MedeWewin is now. Bare Mountain no longer is aptly named. Trip staff don't wear color coded bandanas any more. But in some basic way Pathfinder has stayed the same across my 47 years and across even more decades than that. That fundamental strut, that main stringer holding things up - is canoe tripping.

I've spent more than a year of my life on canoe trips. I've carried so much weight that the disks in my back have been squashed. It was worth it.

My favorite place to be is in a canoe. I've been scared, bored, roasted, frozen and bitten in a canoe. I was followed by wolves once in a canoe. I've fallen asleep while paddling a canoe. To me, the best place to be is in a canoe after sunset on a big lake when it's so

calm you can see the fish breaking the surface and one stroke pushes you along for a minute or more. You feel like you're flying in space with stars both above and below. There's nothing else like it. I have the privilege to do that now on Lake Temagami with my wife Jeri who is with me here at this reunion for the first time.

Kids come here for a lot of reasons. I was sent here because I was a hyperactive, annoyingly inquisitive 9 year old and there was little for me to do in my hometown, London Ontario in the summer. Kids like it here also for a lot of reasons. I liked it because it was beautiful and it was so different from being with my family. This place saved my life and I suspect that it saved a few others of you here now too, although some of you may not know it yet.

This party celebrates the camp's 95th season. I hope there are people like Roy and Swift, Mac and Glenn and Sladds to keep it going for are least 95 more.

Thank you.