

January 2011

The Torch

Friends of Camp Kenan Newsletter

Issue 1

Passing the Torch

The original seed for the Friends of Camp Kenan actually germinated years before the organization was formed in 1996. In my opinion, the seminal event was the arrival of Gil Mosher in Lockport in the late 1950s, and his subsequent appointment as the Executive Director of the Lockport YMCA. He was also the Camp Director in the early 1960s and was keenly aware of the significance of this part of the YMCA program. He was responsible for luring a young Program Director, Robert "Goose" Gray, to come to Camp and then to the Lockport YMCA. Tied down by responsibilities in Lockport, Gil was forced to relinquish his Camp Director position in the mid-60s. In the backlash of the Vietnam War, social upheaval, and spiraling inflation, resident camps all over the country were declining and closing. Camp Kenan was no exception, dropping to only a few hundred boys for the entire summer (at that time, Kenan was a boys-only operation). In 1969 Gil appointed a young and talented Lockport teacher, Ron Main, to revitalize a summer camp that was in the midst of a steep decline. A charismatic leader with an eye for talent, Ron Main started to hire athletes from Lockport High School and neighboring districts. With Goose's innovative program and Ron's stern but nurturing leadership, they molded these young people with a simple motto: "Camp is for the campers". Staff members formed lifelong bonds in the spirit of service to others. Not surprisingly, many of these early staff members went on to outstanding careers in teaching and public service.

Camp enrollment soared, in an era when other Y camps were still struggling and vanishing. In 1973 girls camp was started and camp continued to grow. Campers grew into counselors, and the circle became self-perpetuating. Ron Main continued as Camp Director into the early 80's. With a solid base thus established, Camp Kenan has continued to flourish under successive Directors.

In the mid 90's, an informal discussion about a benefit for Camp Kenan turned into a discussion about forming an alumni organization. Gil Mosher proposed a non-profit organization dubbed the Friends of Camp Kenan. As Executive Director of the Lockport YMCA, Gil made suggestions about how the process could start. His support was crucial in getting the approval of the YMCA Trustees, who naturally could be wary of an outside group. Lockport attorney Ange DiMillo was consulted, and the Friends of Camp Kenan was established in 1996. Several meetings were held, including several dinner meetings at Alex's Restaurant in Batavia (to accommodate out-of-town founders). Included in the original group were Gil Mosher, Ron Main, Goose Gray, Ken & PJ Haak, Kevin Clark, Jeff Tracy, Bill Heller, Bob Mosher, and Bill Neidlinger. The first alumni gathering, dubbed "Goosestock", was held in September of 1996. Nearly 300 people attended. Donations were accepted - Bob Billingsley was extraordinarily generous - and the Friends made contributions for the betterment of Camp. Annual

By Ken Haak, Sr.

gatherings have been held every September. Now, the leadership of the Friends of Camp Kenan has been passed to a new generation. A generation that grew up experiencing the "Spirit of Camp Kenan", absorbed its ideals, and now eagerly accepts responsibility for extending the ideal to yet another generation.

As former president of the Friends of Camp Kenan, I think I speak for the entire group of "old-timers". Your ideas and enthusiasm are exciting and infectious. There is an obvious bond that bridges all generations of Camp Kenan alumni. I am gratified that so many people have volunteered their time and efforts to keep this organization vibrant, and I have confidence that the Friends of Camp Kenan will grow ever stronger. Hold high the torch...

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Barker • New York

Make new friends, but keep the old, one is silver and the other's gold....A circle is round, it has no end, that's how long I want to be your friend....

Meet the Friends of Camp Kenan Board of Directors

By Elizabeth (McGuire) Millen

On Saturday September 18, 2010 the “torch was passed” and, along with the Old Gray Goose, a new group of individuals were voted onto the Friends of Camp Kenan Board Directors.

They are as follows:

Mark Natemeier, President

Daniel W. Doctor, Vice President

Elizabeth (McGuire) Millen, Secretary

Brigid Tobin, Treasurer

Lisa (Polovick) Flaherty

Kayleigh Fischer

Cindy Roth

William (Bill) Spencer

To Our 2010 Docents

Thank you to all that attended Goosestock 2010. We hope that you truly felt as though you were back home, at Camp Kenan, just as it was when you were a camper or staff member. We hope that it was an event that you were proud to bring your family to, sharing with them your home away from home, the place that helped mold you into the person or parent you are today, showing them what Camp Kenan was all about. Those were our goals.

We especially want to thank those of you that reached deep into your pockets to support the mission of the Friends of Camp Kenan. There are not enough words to express the gratitude we feel for your big-heartedness and generosity.

With your donations we are working with the new Camp Kenan Director, as well as our Scholarship Committee, to enrich Camp’s program and the 2011 Camp Kenan experience for children we identify

By Elizabeth (McGuire) Millen

who will be attending because of your giving.

A big Standing “O”, a round of applause and a sincere thank you to all! Here’s to the future and what we can continue to do together for Camp Kenan and its campers!

Collecting Camp Kenan History

After much discussion, we agree the time has come! Anyone that worked at Camp is important, should always be remembered and never forgotten. Camp is built upon traditions that have been passed down through the generations. It’s important to capture our Camp Kenan staff history now and we want to go back as far as we possibly can.

In 2011 the Friends of Camp Kenan will be launching a revised website where you

will be able to provide your own personal Camp Kenan history (i.e. years you worked, position you held on staff, what your favorite memories are, etc.)

This is a big endeavor, it will take time and we need your help. We are looking to those of you that have kept memorabilia over the years, staff lists, pictures, and more! Please gather your things together because it’s time to get it on record once and for all.

By Elizabeth (McGuire) Millen

Please stay tuned for more in upcoming Friends of Camp Kenan communications about collecting Camp Kenan history.

For anyone interested in helping gather information or reaching out to staff both past and present, please contact Elizabeth (McGuire) Millen @ millenfam@gmail.com. Thank you!

Anything for Program

As you sit inside during these cold winter months you may be thinking to yourself, “Self, cause that’s what I call myself, I have a lot of old clothes and toys in the garage. What am I going to do with them?” or “I have a lot of old clothes and toys in the basement. What am I going to do with them?”

Well, Friends of Camp Kenan thought the same thing and so we are currently having a program drive because we always want there to be more at Camp Kenan! That is right. We are collecting anything that you think would be useful to program. Such as crazy outfits, not so crazy outfits, toy guns and swords, paints, crayons, shower curtains, outdoor gear, most anything that you can think of that will benefit program at Camp Kenan.

Please do not drop off your donations at Camp Kenan or the Lockport YMCA (unless you have previously made arrangements with the Camp Director).

All donated items may be mailed to or dropped off anytime to:

Elizabeth Millen
603 Willow Street
Lockport, NY 14094

Thank you!

By Kayleigh Fischer



*Bring us your prom dresses!
Bring us your silly hats!
Pictured: Stacey Huth &
Daniel Doctor, circa 1996*

Goosestock 2011

By Lisa (Polovick) Flaherty

Announcements, Announcements, Announcements...Lisa's got another one, another one, another one. Lisa's got another one; she's got them all the time...Announcements, Announcements, Announcements! YES?.....

As Chair of the Goosestock 2011 Planning Committee and Friends of Camp Kenan Board Member, I would like to personally invite you to attend the 15th Annual Goosestock, Friday September 9, 2011 through Sunday September 11, 2011. Hosted at Camp Kenan in Barker, NY, Goosestock is an opportunity for former staff members to reunite and support Friends of Camp Kenan's mission.

Just as it did last year, Camp Kenan opens its gates and invites you and your family to move in and spend a weekend living as a camper. This year promises to build on the success of Goosestock 2010 with rocking mess halls, dizzy bat relays, Kenan NBA game, craft lodge activities, camp fires, rock climbing, Chapel and of course, the one... the only... Gray Goose. Should

it rain, don't you worry we've got that covered with classic Camp Kenan indoor activity options like lip sync, skit night or Dutch auction. Therefore, be prepared because you've been warned!

Along with all of these exciting activities being planned, this year's specially featured events include the Michael Tobin Memorial Chapel dedication, Friends of Camp Kenan annual membership meeting, the fund raising annual auction and an opportunity to meet Camp Kenan's new Camp Director, Luke Kantor.

This year we will once again be asking for a registration fee and providing each attendee with a custom designed Goosestock t-shirt, meals and memories! Look for more details in the spring newsletter on ways to pre-register and reserve your favorite cabin this year.

We are hoping this year that everyone will pitch in to help with the meal preparation, dish washing, fire building and more. But if you're dreaming of re-living your days

as Program Director, Crafts staff or Athletics staff at Goosestock 2011 contact me at lisapolovick@gmail.com.

So... pack your city clothes and leave them at the door, and lead the life you've "lead once" before!

Please Support:

Frey's Tasty Treat

6186 South Transit Road, Lockport, NY 14094

Tops Markets

9660 South Transit Amherst, NY 14051 and
3949 Lockport/Olcott Road, Lockport, NY 14094

T-Putt Pizza, Wings and Things

693 Quaker Road, Barker, NY 14067

They were HUGE supporters of Goosestock 2010!

The Michael Tobin Memorial Chapel

By Elizabeth (McGuire) Millen & Timothy McGuire

Oh, come, come, come, come...
Come to the church in the wild wood...
Oh come to the church in the dale....

On the afternoon of Saturday, September 10, 2011 the Friends of Camp Kenan, along with the Tobin family, will be hosting a dedication of the newly renovated "Old Chapel in the Woods." The Chapel will then be renamed the "Michael Tobin Memorial Chapel."

Michael Tobin was born on December 11, 1970. He grew to be quite an athlete; he played little loop football, and in junior high, became a runner, a swimmer, and a diver. Unfortunately, Mike was born with a hole in his heart that was not discovered until he was a teenager, and soon he became unable to do those activities. As a junior in high school, he had open-heart surgery to repair the hole in his heart. When that surgery failed to improve his condition, he was put on a heart transplant list. After he graduated from Lockport High School in 1989, he intended to attend the State University of New York College at Geneseo, but his health would not permit it, so he enrolled in classes at Niagara County Community College. He was often ill but determined to go to class, if only to stay active. At Camp Kenan, Mike's home away from home, he was a camper from 1980-1984, a CIT turned Counselor from 1985-1988, and in 1989, at the age of 18, he returned to camp as a "Good Visitor." On September 21, 1989, Mike became the

recipient of a new heart. The surgery was considered successful and he recovered quickly. After only two weeks in the hospital, he was sent home. Sadly, the next night his body rejected his new heart. He went into cardiac arrest and could not be revived. It was devastating to his dear family and friends. He was survived by his parents, David and Cathy Tobin, his younger siblings, Renée (a former Camp Kenan counselor) and Christopher (a former Camp Kenan camper). Michael also left behind many dear friends from Camp Kenan.

The Chapel was one of Mike's favorite places at camp, as it was for many. Indeed, he asked his family to spread his ashes there should he not survive, which they did. After Mike passed away on October 8, 1989, the Tobin family placed his ashes in the Chapel. Over the years the erosion wore away the earth there, much of the Chapel grounds and trees were lost, and the Chapel became unusable. The Friends of Camp Kenan are pleased to be able to honor the loving memory of Michael Tobin by bringing back to life the "Old Chapel in the Woods" with a new look (but with the same old feel) and a new name.

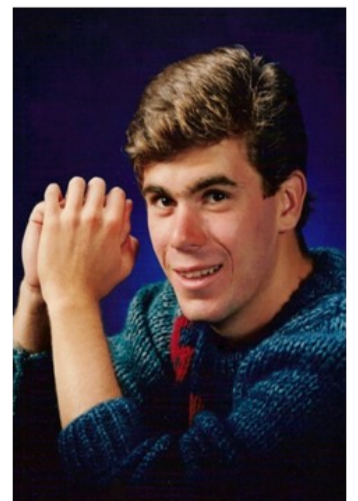
We are grateful that Camp Kenan's very own William H. Heller will be leading the dedication and memorial service, alongside Daniel Doctor and other friends. All are invited to attend this special

Goosestock event to listen to and share memories of Mike. More details will be provided as Goosestock 2011 approaches. For now, please feel free to visit the event created on Facebook, "Michael Tobin Memorial Chapel."

No spot is so dear to my childhood...
As the little brown church in the vale...

"The Friends of Camp Kenan are so pleased to be able to honor the loving memory of Michael Tobin this way...."

Michael
Tobin, 1970-
1989



Friends of Camp Kenan

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info@friendsofcampkenan.org

www.friendsofcampkenan.org



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Friends of Camp Kenan Mission

To provide supplemental support for the continuation of Camp Kenan as a summer resident camp for young people.

To support the philosophy of Dr. William Rand Kenan in providing the initial foundation for Camp Kenan: "That all children may grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man."

To provide for the continuing fellowship of Camp Kenan staff.

Letter From the President

By Mark Natemeier

"A man travels the world over in search of what he needs and returns home to find it"
~George Moore

I last worked at Camp Kenan the summer of 1996, I only came back to Camp Kenan once after that. I had moved on with my life, as many of us former staff members have.

As my children grew up I started telling them devotion at night. Sometimes we sang songs, sometimes I told a story, and sometimes I told them about my time at Camp Kenan.

When my daughter Maddy turned seven years old we were shocked when she said she wanted to go to Camp Kenan. We

tried to convince her [especially my wife] to try a camp in Erie first. She was convinced that Camp Kenan was the place to go. So we signed up our very determined and very stubborn oldest child.

We drove Maddy to Camp Kenan, this was the first time I would be back in about ten years. We toured camp, I ran into a few old friends and it was like a part of me that had died came back to life.

There is a reason I choose to share this story in the first ever edition of "The Torch" newsletter, because most of you may be in the same situation that I was once in. I can't begin to describe what it feels like to go back home to Camp Kenan after being gone for so long. What I can tell you is that it changed who I was, and it changed how I was living my life.

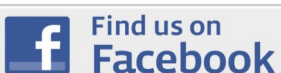
It doesn't matter if you haven't been back to camp for three years, ten years, or twenty-five years, almost everyone that I spoke with at Goosestock 2010 had the same experience that I had, most couldn't describe it in words.

So my charge to you is to find a way to get back! Excuses are so much easier to make than commitments. We all have jobs, families, pets, yards, school, obligations and many other reasons WHY WE CAN'T MAKE IT BACK. Look into your heart and find a REASON TO COME BACK for Goosestock 2011. You won't regret it, bring a few friends too, and I will be there to "Welcome you to Kenan Camp....."

Special Thanks: To the members of the Friends of Camp Kenan Board of Directors and to Ken Haak, Sr. who contributed articles. To Sean Fuller for revising the logo and providing us with several different versions to use. To Lindsey Piech for providing the photo for "Anything for Program". To the Tobin family for providing the photo of Michael Tobin for the article "Michael Tobin Memorial Chapel".

If you have an article idea that you might like to contribute in the next issue of "The Torch" please contact Elizabeth (McGuire) Millen by March 31, 2011 directly at millenfam@gmail.com. We'd love to hear what Camp Kenan has meant to you! All article ideas are welcome! The 2nd Edition of "The Torch" is due to come out in April 2011. Thank you!

E. Millen, Publisher & Co-Editor/L. Flaherty, Co-Editor



Please go to www.facebook.com and search for "Friends of Camp Kenan" to join our NEW and official Non-Profit Facebook page.