



**Camperships
For
Nebagama**

Making Camps A Place of Welcome For All

The Newsletter of Camperships for Nebagama • Summer 2016

NebagaNotes

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF THE DIGITAL AGE AT CAMP

By John Sawyer

Every Nebagama alumnus has vivid memories of getting off the bus at the beginning of a summer at camp. So many things change for a kid in that instant. The change from largely indoor to largely outdoor living. The change from an often individual life to a far more communal one. For many, there is the change from the sounds of traffic and congestion and urban life to the sounds of birds and crickets and wind in the pines. It is our memories of these changes, and the opportunities for growth that they bring for thousands of kids, that motivate many of us to donate to CFN.

These days, that moment marks another major change in the life of the Nebagama camper: a month (or two) largely away from the “screens” — the smartphones, tablets, laptops and TVs — that seem to dominate our lives these days.

I’ve often found myself wondering what this digital era has meant for camp, and what coming to camp means for kids who now live such a plugged-in life. Where does camp draw the line? Do campers try and smuggle in technology? Do kids actually look forward to “disconnecting” for a few months? I got in touch with Nebagama co-director Adam Kaplan to learn more.

“We ask campers to leave their devices at home,” says Kaplan. “Research shows an inverse relationship between technology and soft skills — the traits, social graces, communication, language, personal habits, and optimism that characterize relationships with other people. At camp we are all about developing soft skills.”

While they do have the occasional camper who tries to skirt the rules, Kaplan says, in general parents and campers alike see the value in the policy. “We have heard time and time again [from campers] about what a relief it is to be able to put down their phones and not feel the pressure to be in constant electronic contact. They speak often about their increased ability to connect with the natural world when they pick up their heads from their devices.

Plus, with the intense pressures of school, sports and other stressors in life, we often hear how it is really nice to “check out” of that world to recharge their internal batteries. It prepares them to attack the next school year rejuvenated and with a fresh and clear head.”

Just as we all have vivid memories of stepping off the bus beneath Paul Bunyan’s watchful gaze at the beginning of a summer, equally clear are those memories of stepping on the bus on the lower diamond as each summer came to a close. Part of the sadness of those moments was a feeling that,



Campers arrive at the beginning of a summer. Camp gives kids and adults alike a break from the 24/7 online connectivity of modern life.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

By Adam Braude

The first day of camp. In my case it was 1984, and thirty-two years later I still remember: flying from Kansas City with both my older brother, Peter, and CN Big Brother, Ed Juda; saying hi to Nardie in the old airport HQ near the baggage claim; eating lunch at McDonald's on MSP's gold concourse; and then the long bus ride to camp, no doubt made worse by the butterflies in my stomach.

In subsequent years, the first day of camp was all about anticipation. An entire bus full of campers couldn't wait until the counselors passed out cabin lists so we could see where we would be living for the summer, and more importantly, with whom. Inevitably, when the bus turned off of US 2 onto County Road P, excitement would build for seven miles until we finally saw the Homes on the Range, the sand dunes, and then making it official, the big yellow and blue "Camp Nebagamon for Boys" sign.

Without fail, on an annual basis the appearance of every bus always felt like a celebration, each one bigger than the last as the day went on and more campers were present to join the staff in the cheers and high fives welcoming the new arrivals. For all of us who had spent the last ten or eleven months counting down the days until our return to Nebagamon, there was nothing better than the adrenaline rush of reconnecting with old friends and returning staff members, walking the familiar paths, and jumping right into a game of four-square, Rinde ball or ping pong.

All these memories are a long introduction to a very simple point: assuming we don't run into any production or distribution problems, this edition of NebagaNotes will be mailed on the first day of the 2016 camping season. That means by the time you read this, campers will already be earning ranks, heading out on the trail, or perhaps just enjoying a good game of cribbage on the Big House porch. And as has been the case for the last twenty years, many of those kids will be recipients of camperships sponsored by CFN.



Logger 3, first four weeks, 1984.

Simply put, the aforementioned memories, and thousands and thousands like them from alumni throughout the decades are the reason why CFN exists. Those of us who support this organization believe a successful camping experience can impact a child's life in ways that will stay with them always. Moreover, as I've written before, I would suggest by opening up its remarkable opportunities to kids who would not otherwise experience them, CFN makes Camp Nebagamon itself a stronger institution and a better place.

With this in mind, if thoughts of your first day of camp (or any of the days that followed...) continue to stir something in your heart, please consider a contribution to CFN. Implicitly, such gifts are a way to say, as the song goes, "Thank you, Camp Nebagamon." Now that sailboats are once again dancing across Lake Nebagamon, paddlers are traveling through the Boundary Waters, and Council Fires will be burning every Sunday night all Summer long, what better time is there to support CFN? Thanks in advance for your generosity.

KTFB,
Adam

THE DIGITAL AGE

(Continued from cover)

barring a few letters or phone calls, I wouldn't have nearly any contact with such close friends for nearly a year. Nowadays, kids are often in touch with their cabinmates, in real time, by the end of that same day. And they stay in touch throughout the colder months.

Kalplan says that in the offseason, "technology has been incredible. It is rare to find the cabin at camp that doesn't engage in group texting, or shared Facebook pages, or group Snapchats (whatever that is!!!) throughout the school year. These guys are able to stay in constant contact with each other all year long. This has served to really deepen and broaden the friendships and connections that are forged at camp."

That's the other side of the technology coin. Just as camp provides refuge for a few months from the 24/7 connectivity of modern life, that same technology has made it so much easier for the camp family to stay in touch, and for memories of the summer to be much more present.

Camp also employs a variety of online tools to both keep the camp family connected during the offseason and to spread the word about camp (see sidebar below). Here at CFN, we're working on doing the same. You can start by checking out our website, CNCharities.com, which is shared with our sister organization, the Camp Nebagamon Scholarship Fund. You can like CFN on Facebook to get occasional updates and reminders of camp. We share news about off-season fundraisers and get-togethers online.

It's a brave new world out there. Despite how rapidly the landscape of technology can change and how much it impacts daily life, camp is consistent. The latest app or friend's selfies gets left behind when kids walk past Paul Bunyan in June or July. Yet these same tools make it just a little easier for all of us to stay connected with one another and with camp, and for the magical thing that is the camp family to become just a little tighter, closer and more inclusive.

CONNECTING WITH CAMP ONLINE

Camp has a number of ways that campers, staff, alums and the broader camp family can stay in touch and stay connected. Here at CFN, we've got a few as well.

- Camp website: www.campnebagamon.com (don't miss Adam's summer updates!)
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/CampNebagamon
- Instagram: [@campnebagamon](https://www.instagram.com/campnebagamon)
- Youtube: www.youtube.com/campnebagamon (check out the new promotional video!)
- Camperships for Nebagamon: www.cncharities.org/cfn
- CFN on Facebook: www.facebook.com/CampershipsForNebagamon

Have another way you stay in touch online, a story of a good camp connection, or a suggestion for future Nebaganotes? Let us know! Email CFNinfo@cncharities.org.



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INSIDE...

Camp in the
Digital Age.

From the
President's Desk.

"This Shall Be a Place of Welcome for All."

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