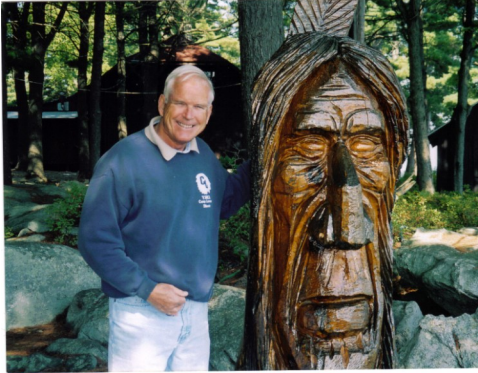




# Camp Lawrence Chatter

February 2011



**FAREWELL to the Camp Lawrence Family...** This will be my final “Camp Lawrence Chatter” to you. As many of you already know, after 17 plus years as your director, I have decided that I need to retire. The main reason for this is the two separate accidents that I incurred during the last two summers at camp involving the rupture of both of my quadriceps. The result of these two accidents hinders me from accomplishing all that I feel I need to do at camp, especially being able to get around camp as often as I would like. So, late last October, Steve Ives (the CEO of the Merrimack Valley YMCA) and I agreed that it be best to begin the recruitment process for finding a suitable replacement. Recently this was accomplished with the hiring of a new Camp Lawrence Director, Todd Lennig. Todd comes from Wisconsin where he has been the Director of the Phantom Lakes YMCA Camp for the past few years. He is married and has two young sons ages 1 and 3.

For the past several weeks I have pondered over and over how I should, or would be able to write this letter. How do I adequately say goodbye to so many feelings of accomplishment, and more importantly, to the thousands of campers and the hundreds of staff that I have been honored to know, to watch grow, and to see the positive results in each of them from their Camp Lawrence experience. Words are just not there to do justice at seeing campers come to camp for the very first time, most going through their personal challenge of overcoming homesickness, then meeting new friends who remain with them for years to come. Then to see some deciding to accept the challenge of entering our Counselor-In-Training program, and then to accept their biggest challenge of all...becoming a counselor and leadership team member of our camp. Camp is all about having fun and being able to do things that one never thought they could or would be able to do: like jumping off a tree 40 feet from the ground and zipping down a line for 150 yards, or getting up on water-skis after two weeks of immense effort, or finally beating the director in a game of ping pong. But just as important is the success of building upon their self esteem and self confidence, and the great feeling of having the best time of their lives while at camp. I could go on and on, but I think you get my point.

I have seen so much, and have personally experienced so much, during my time as the director of Camp Lawrence, that I feel I need to somehow convey those experiences for the future. I have actually thought about writing a novel, but that is far beyond my capability. What I am currently becoming more and more drawn to is writing short stories about some of the more hilarious experiences and of some of the most challenging events that I have faced, then put them together into “the novel.” Now, that is something that I feel confident I can do, so be on the lookout for this forthcoming bestseller!

Before I get into the ending of this letter, I need to thank two very special people that have been instrumental in guiding me through my years as the director. The first is Lois Wachsmuth, who has been with me at camp for the last 16 years. With my departure, she departs. Lois is the unsung hero of camp. So few people know about all of the myriad of things that she does to keep camp flowing smoothly. Some of you parents have spoken on the phone with her about your son’s personal challenges and know her to be such a positive driving force and comfort. Few know that at the beginning of her time at camp she was very much involved with teaching arts and crafts. Up to now, she has ordered all the arts and crafts supplies, often searching for quality items at substantial cost savings to the camp. She has run the camp store, covered the office, spent countless hours listening to and helping home sick campers, has been available to both campers and staff when other issues have arisen, has been a tremendous help to the nurses in the infirmary, has spent numerous hours researching and ordering program supplies, has reviewed and updated the staff manual annually, being an important contributor during staff training, and has been so helpful in doing all those special needed shopping trips thereby allowing staff to spend more of their time with campers and activities. I could really go on much longer about the things Lois has done, especially on the administrative side of camp, but I will end by saying that Camp Lawrence is going to lose someone of substantial importance and camp will really miss the positive and graceful presence that Lois is for camp.

The other person that I want to mention is Debbie Parker, the director of Camp Nokomis. Debbie and I actually arrived on Bear Island at the same time....1952. Since then Debbie has remained at camp and has been its director since 1975. To me, Debbie is the ultimate camp director. She is loved by thousands and thousands of people, and has that special ability to reach out and touch so many people in a caring and loving way. She has seen me through so many of my challenging times as director and has always offered solid and meaningful advice when I needed such. She and I share common religious beliefs, and those beliefs have been monumental in helping both of us through many tough challenges in our camping experiences. Debbie is a very significant and loving person.

So now is the moment that I must bid you farewell. I know that I have left so many things unsaid, but I know deep down that I can be proud of the things that we have accomplished during the past 17 years. Believe me, Camp Lawrence has come a long way, much has been accomplished, yet much still remains to be done. There will always be things that need to be done. I know the things that I have accomplished and am proud that I was able to do them. No one can take that away from me. The journey as your director has been an honor.

I have crossed the finish line. This remarkable run has ended. I now leave you, but know that at my “final finish line,” some of my thoughts will be of camp and camp and camp. All is well!

**REGISTRATION IS STILL OPEN!**  
Call to enroll for this summer you want to attend is FULL!

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**Check our website for newsletters: [www.mvymcacamps.org](http://www.mvymcacamps.org)**

### Camp Lawrence Open House

Sunday, March 27, 2011 • 2 pm to 4 pm

Slide Show Viewing • 2:30 pm

Andover/North Andover YMCA • 165 Haverhill Street, Andover, MA

Questions? Contact us at 978-975-1330 • [campinfo@mvymca.org](mailto:campinfo@mvymca.org)

Tell all your friends who are thinking about Camp Lawrence that this is a great time to meet new Camp Director Todd Lennig and other staff and get your questions answered.

