



Helping you stay in touch with the Camp Huronda community!

The Huronda Hobbit

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Huronda: A Challenging Experience

By Heather Anderson

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Are you terrified of spiders? Do heights give you that feeling of being nauseous? Does your heart rate increase at the sight of a snake slithering across your path? We all have our phobias and fears, or things in our lives that make us anxious or scared. For some, going to Camp Huronda for two weeks can elicit some of these feelings - especially your first time away from home.

The summer of 2006 was one that I will never forget. Probably one of Camp Huronda's biggest successes occurred during one particular two week session. During that time, I got to know a young person whom I will hold in high esteem for the rest of my life. The challenges this person overcame during these two weeks were life-changing.

The camp session opened like usual with children getting familiar with their cabin mates, counsellor and C.I.T. They became acquainted with the facilities and the other program staff. It was near the end of the second day at camp that a particular camper was brought to my attention who was having a difficult time adjusting. This is not an uncommon experience, and I met with this individual to see where we might make things better and more comfortable. After a half-hour conversation I realized that my eighteen years of strategies might not work in this situation.

I spent a sleepless night wondering what we could do to make the camp session a wonderful experience for this child.

The next day started with a plan! We met after breakfast and had a great conversation. We had a PLAN. It focused on taking camp a half day at a time. We set a goal to strive for during that three hour session, and then evaluated how it transpired. Our meetings were frequent, but enjoyable. However, they always had a purpose. Set a new goal. As time progressed, our meetings became less frequent - and not by my choice. Soon the programs became our Native Day and the Camp Banquet which are the last two days of camp. SUCCESS.

I could not be more proud of any individual than this particular camper. I will always admire this person. I have never had to conquer anything as challenging as this young person did during those two weeks at Camp Huronda. In a new outdoor environment, with no familiar people, never being away from home, sharing a cabin with five other campers, participating in a variety of new activities at specified times, eating meals prepared by a chef - not mom, and being prone to anxiety attacks were some of the challenges this camper had to cope with at camp. It was accomplished in baby steps. We can all learn from the inner strength and determination of this camper. Each day presents us with new challenges. With the right attitude and support, we can all be successful!



The Story of my Life

...As told to Uncle Don by the Birch Tree

It's hard to believe that a year has passed since all the excitement of celebrating Huronda's 35th anniversary. I'm a little put-out though that nobody has asked me how I feel about things. The kids have all gone back home. It is very quiet around here. The chickadees are about, and the ravens

too. The loons are still on the lake.

You know, I've been around a long time, and I've seen many things come and go. Nobody has asked me for my two cents worth, but I am going to give it to you anyway...

In the very early days, there was no camp - just a lot of open space. The bush had all been cleared. There was a farm here, but I've forgotten the family's name. They had cows that ate grass on the side of the hill. A sad thing happened to one of the family members, but that's another story...

At the time, I was a birchling, only 12 or 15 inches tall. It was difficult not to be stepped on by those Big Cows (especially when you are stationary). Somehow I survived and entered my teenage years. You know, it's hard to believe that back then there were very few trees. They had all been cut down to provide for pasture and crops. It was hard for the farmers to make a decent living. The soil was too sandy.

An interesting thing happened in 1950. Two ladies, Miss Jane Coventry and Miss Helene Rothwell, bought the farm and started Camp Waseosa. There were three groups of campers. The youngest were the Pixies and Fairies. They were boys and girls aged four to six. The middle group were the Juniors - boys and girls aged seven to ten. The oldest group was the Intermediate Girls, aged eleven to fourteen (no older boys at the time). The girls stayed in three chalet-type cabins, and were divided into native tribes. Personally, I like the Hobbit groupings better...

The camp had two full-time nurses right on the property, and a doctor was on-call. Campers wore neat tidy uniforms which kind of matched my clean white bark. I have to say here that I was becoming quite handsome. I was filling out nicely in girth and height. Also, I was enjoying all the activity. One thing the ladies did was plant all kinds of trees, probably hundreds, maybe thousands. In time, the trees filled a lot of open spaces. The property became more and more beautiful as the trees grew and became bigger like me.

Another change occurred that affected me personally in a very positive way in the summer of 1971. The Canadian Diabetes Association bought the camp from the two ladies. Actually, I think it started with a group of parents who wanted their kids to have a camp of their own.

What I really remember was when the first kids arrived at camp, Uncle Don had them all gather around me to divide them into cabin groups. You know, after a long winter and spring, it was really something to be right in the middle of all the excited talking and carrying-on. Some were quiet, but most were noisy and happy.

You know though, the years marched on. By the time Huronda had celebrated its 35th anniversary, I was beginning to feel my age. The darn old woodpeckers had drilled holes in me, letting my sap drip out. The wasps come buzzing about, and the red squirrels scamper up and down me. It's down-right annoying!

I notice that Uncle Don has slowed down too. I think he and I are the same age. Pretty ancient. Heather is the director now. She is very organized, and makes my leaves flutter.

I have probably prattled on long enough. In spite of my advancing years, I still feel needed and worthwhile. Steve the maintenance guy put a little fence around me. Now the green grass grows all around (all around), and I'm still the centre of things when the skilly rings and the kids come running. They never have to be called twice.

Well, that's my story. I hope you liked it. My cousin down at the Native Village has many stories as well. Just listen to the wind and you'll hear too. Thanks for listening!

Blanc *Betula Papyrifera* (Birch Tree)

Author's note: This past September, soon after being told this story by the Birch Tree, a big wind storm hit Camp Huronda, uprooting many trees. The Birch Tree was heavily damaged in the storm. Perhaps where the green grass grows all around, all around, there are some birchlings now growing or maybe a teen-age cousin could be transplanted there. What do you think should happen?



Take This Job and Love it

selves. Monetary pressures may weigh heavily. Friends and family might not want to see you disappear for 9 weeks. After you've spent a few summers at Huronda though, it's a tough habit to break.

Everyone who has packed their bags for a third or fifth or tenth summer at Huronda has heard a family member or friend ask them, sometimes seriously, sometimes jokingly, "When are you going to get a Real Job?"

From a certain perspective, or maybe from watching *Meatballs*, it might seem like a camp job is a pretty easy gig - play games, sing songs, get a good tan. The reality is quite a bit different.

First of all, Huronda is the most structured, heavily programmed camp there is. Anywhere. In a two-week period, Huronda will have something like 16 themed, costumed programs with introductions, and plots woven into the days leading up to them. Lay that framework over top of a regular camp program of canoeing/swimming/ropes/bikes/sports/crafts, etc, and that makes for a pretty busy place. Then add in the test-eat-insulin routine of diabetes, and you have a daily timetable that starts at 7:30 and ends for staff, usually at 11:30 or so. Somewhere in that schedule staff plan everything. It's a Real Job. There aren't many Real-er ones. And the skills you develop working at camp will transfer to every other job you will ever hold.

Working at a camp entails working well with others. That's the best quality any prospective employee can have. From a counselor's perspective, to work at camp, you must be able to work with other counsellors, with your counsellor-in-training, with the area staff, with the medical staff, with the program director, everyone.

You have to be able to lead people - not just the campers but other staff as well. You need to be able to follow when other people are leading. You need to be able to fix stuff. You need to be flexible when something is not working out. You have to be accountable to lot of different people. You need to meet deadlines. You have to cheerfully do a lot of stuff when you are very tired. You need to be able to get Trinity and Serena to play nice with Jenny, even after Jenny told them they were mean.

One time, an older friend was visiting me at camp, and marveled, "The amount of work the staff do here is amazing! How do you get all of these teenagers to act so responsibly?"

My answer was: "You give them a lot of responsibility."

There are probably quite a few 16 year-olds who come back to camp as counsellors-in-training who don't quite know what they are getting into. But here's the deal. You give a counsellor a cabin full of kids to look after. You tell him or her that they are responsible for the campers' health and safety. You make them responsible for getting the campers from point A to point B with their blood tested and their teeth brushed. You give them a couple of programs to run. You make them be Captain Stubing for Camp Show, and they've never seen an episode of the Love Boat. They have to sink or swim, and they swim.

One time our country sent all of our 18 year-olds off to fight a war. They did alright.

The same kind of growth happens with the campers. You tell them to test their blood sugar and show up at the flag pole with their running shoes on, and they all do it. The last ones to put their finger beside their noses have to clean up the table, and they do. You tell them to pick an award to work on, and they start it and finish it. Then they go home, and their parents can't believe how they've changed. They are so independent now!

These days I run an outdoor education centre. My own little camp. Sometimes we hire seasonal staff. Sometimes we take on co-op students. And when I am interviewing a potential candidate, knowing what I know, nothing carries more weight for me on a resume than "Camp Counsellor." Especially when it's followed by something like, "Summers, 1999-present."

For every staff member who has worked at camp, there comes a time when you have to make the hard decision about whether or not to work at Huronda for another summer. Other summertime opportunities present them-



Well-qualified job candidate!

Help Wanted: Able-bodied people needed to clear camp trails before the summer of 2007 gets going. Donate one weekend in late April or early May to help fix up the Ridge. Stay over at camp on Friday night, and spend a good day's labour in the fresh Muskoka air on Saturday. All volunteers must be 18 years of age. If interested, please e-mail Wally Devos at easyway1@mac.com or phone Wally at 905-619-0783.

Best Pics of 2006





Letters from Home

This was our very first experience having our son Michael away from home, and out of our care. Michael had mixed emotions, as did the rest of us. In the back of my mind and his dad's, we knew this would be a place where he could finally fit in and be safe, because everyone there had diabetes just like him.

Michael was diagnosed December 9, 2003 when he was eight years old. As we arrived at Camp Huronda for 'C' camp, the tears streamed. His grandparents, his sister and I were all there for the big send-off. As exciting as it all seemed, it was devastating for me as a mom to let him go for two long weeks. Moms have to be superheroes though. I felt like one, at least on the outside. The inside was a completely different story. We finally pried away from him and left. I think we all cried (grandpa and grandma too) the entire four-and-a-half-hour ride home.

The two weeks took forever. The day we went to pick him up, Michael caught a glimpse of me and his dad and came running with open arms and tears. I thought something was wrong, but he told me he was so happy to see me, and that he missed all of us. He had a fabulous time though. He made new friends, learned new songs, and said he fit in. We heard stories about canoeing, night-time fires, and the pancakes that were cooked on the outside and runny on the inside. His counsellor Geoff was so much fun, and they would sneak around and do silly things. He enjoyed the crafts, the games everything. This, all coming from a boy who wrote me a letter one day into camp, saying he could not make it 2 weeks, and insisted we come pick him up immediately!!! This was an experience for Michael, as a child dealing with diabetes, and an experience for a family who had to let go, and know that he was in good hands, and in a place where he would have the same care he had at home.

Thank-you Camp Huronda. Thank-you staff and counsellors for a job well-done, and an experience that will be remembered always.

Lesley Schnarr

MacKenzie Taron's Top 9 Memories of Camp Huronda

- 1) Swimming in Lake Waseosa - huge water trampoline, lots of fun!
- 2) Lots of sports - especially: basketball, baseball, hockey, volleyball, badminton, tetherball, football!
- 3) Adventures to the Native Village.
- 4) Climbing the rock climbing wall - 40 feet up!
- 5) Trip Hut - outdoor survival skills like fire building, tent set-up, fort building.
- 6) Horses to ride and take care of.
- 7) Good night time snacks, especially the peanut butter Rice Krispy squares - YUMMY!
- 8) Making fun crafts! (GIMP)
- 9) Always someone there to take care of you!

I will never forget my times at Camp Huronda. I had lots of fun!

Mackenzie Taron is 12 years old and lives in Waterloo. He has attended camp the past 2 years.

Top Ten Predicted Effects of Global Warming on Camp

10. More raccoons in the shallow end.
9. Glacier on Ridge will melt.
8. Role of Chitamo to be replaced by Al Gore.
7. More cook sweat in Sloppy Joes.
6. More horses named Kyoto.
5. Pottery kiln to be replaced by black box in Trip Hut field
4. Heather will have to decrease temperature of water bed.
3. Counselors will increase to 2 showers per week.
2. Camp van to run on fumes from lost and found items.

And the Number One Predicted Effect of Climate Change on Camp....

1. Beans to be banned to limit camper methane production.

Making a Difference

Someone once told me that life is like a bowl of cherries; when you are little, you take out, and when you are older you get to put back in. That's part of what gives me personal fulfillment with being on the Camp Huronda Camp Committee. It allows

me the easy opportunity to "put back" to the place that made such a gigantic difference on my life. Many of you may feel the same way about Huronda. Whatever the reason, the time you spent at camp had a big effect on you. If it's the right fit for you, consider some of these easy ways to make camp an even better program for the nearly 400 kids that attend each summer.

- **Craft Shop** - Camp Huronda has some pretty big needs at the Craft Shop. Do you have contact with someone that can provide some of the traditional items? Camp is always looking for quality supplies. Think gimp, scissors, crayons, markers, craft paints, construction paper, white glue, tons of beads and tie-dye, white t-shirts, white pillow cases or craft kits. Know anyone at Crayola? For "kit" quantities, please remember that a single section of campers in one period is about 25 kids (360 per summer).
- **Laundry** - Huronda does a lot of laundry. Do you know anybody that could provide laundry detergent? (Figure on 800 loads as camp washes a lot of bedding)
- **Maintenance stuff** - Gift certificates for Home Depot or Canadian Tire will allow Steve (the camp's resident property manager) to allot the gift where it happens to be most needed... a new water heater, hinges for the barn doors, or paint brushes.
- **Walk 5 km, and raise some serious dough** - This year, the Diabetes Hope Foundation is running its first-ever Walk For Hope. In the 10+ years that the DHF has been in existence, I've never seen them do an event that isn't a winner. Their program has donated about \$150,000 to Camp Huronda. It was because of Huronda's needs that this independent charity was formed, and it has gone on to support thousands of young people with diabetes in incredible ways. This year's 5 km walk would also be a great opportunity for current campers to reunite, cross camp-period boundaries, and even give them a chance to see staffers in their "real life" roles.

Similarly, past staff and campers will be regrouping among different decades of Hurondites, and raising some easy funds for Camp Huronda. The Hope Foundation has highlighted camp for this walk by creating Team Huronda. Participants choosing Team Huronda will have the money they raise earmarked specifically for camp. Mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers can all help walk and ask their friends if they'd like to support camp. It's early February that I'm writing this article, and already the organizers have told me of exciting plans that are coming together. We could make this a gigantic benefit for the camp on top of the great time that it's going to be for us on that day.

The 5 km fundraiser is on Sunday September 23, and you can find information and sponsorship forms on this web site: www.diabeteshopefoundation.com.

Let's make the day into a double-whamee... After the walk, we'll all go for a bite to eat at a local restaurant, and there you'll get a chance to talk to the Huronda alumni that you saw in the crowd.. Want an invite to this gathering? Want to see who else is on the list? Just e-mail me at jef-fyolleck@hotmail.com and put "Huronda invite, pleeease...." in the subject line. I'll send you a link to our Huronda get-together. Maybe we'll try a Diabetes Restaurant battle of the bands? Pause. Of course, there will be kangaroo-court-quality door prizes and a guaranteed good time.

Cheers, Jeff

DIABETES HOPE FOUNDATION
is thrilled to be hosting the

**DIABETES
WALK
FOR HOPE**




**Sunday September 23, 2007
Toronto**
Etienne Brule Park near the Old Mill Inn

Featuring disco music, face painting,
fantastic giveaways, prizes and a delicious lunch!

Join the
CAMP HURONDA TEAM

Register Online:
www.diabeteshopefoundation.com

YES, I CAN HELP!

- 1) I would like to donate \$ _____ to *Camp Huronda*. My cheque payable to *Camp Huronda* is enclosed.
(A charitable donation receipt will be issued)
- 2) I would like to volunteer my services to *Camp Huronda*.
- 3) I can donate products, equipment or services to *Camp Huronda* (or I know someone who can).

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY – and mail to address below.

Mr. Mrs. Ms. Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Work Telephone: _____

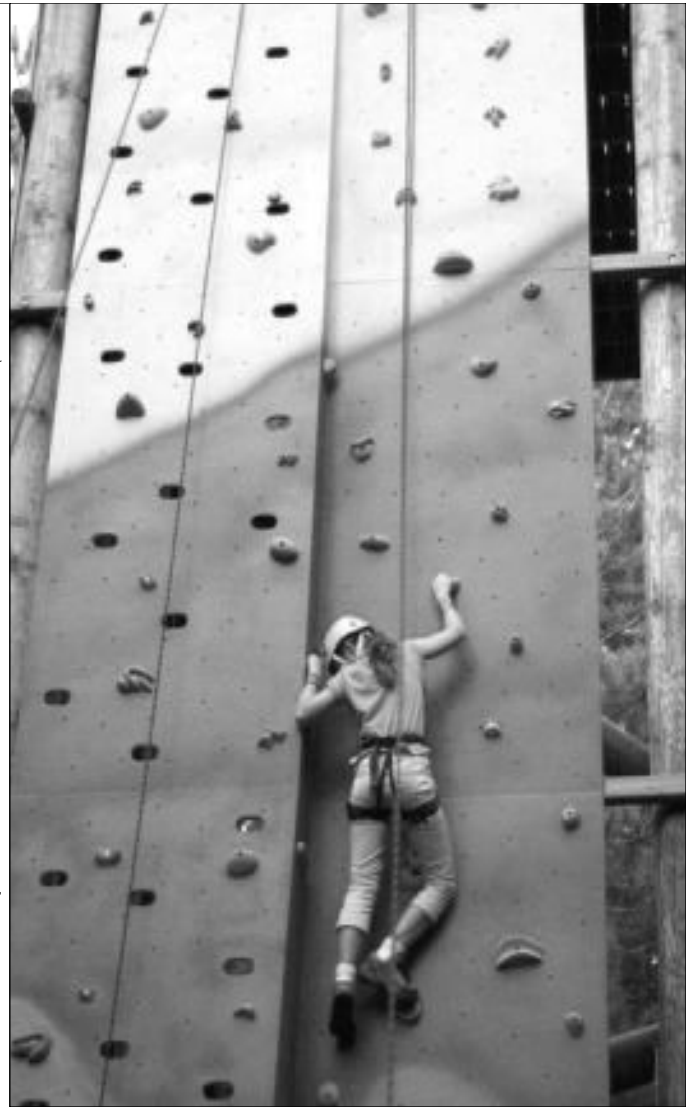
Fax: _____ Email: _____

Please forward to: Camp Huronda, 40-1110 Finch Avenue West, Box 1097, North York, Ontario, M3J 3M2. Thanks!

Cliffhanger

Well, after nearly a whole summer of waiting, waiting and more waiting, the brand new addition to Camp Huronda was up and running

for the summer of 2006. You guessed it; the Climbing Tower was the place to be! Consisting of four different climbing sides, including a forty-foot cargo net, rock climbing walls and a trust element called the switchback, the tower really brought out the best in everyone who tried it. Working down at the tower gives you a neat perspective- sure, the view from the top is pretty cool, but often the view from the bottom provides more entertainment. I have never seen rock-climbing skills like the ones displayed this summer- there were some people who must have been part monkey to climb the way they did! Even though it is physically challenging to attempt a climb, sometimes the mental challenge can prove to be more difficult. It takes a lot of courage to put your trust into a harness, rope and helmet- so many people were able to push outside of their comfort zone to take on the challenge of the tower. This is why this is such a great new addition- even though you climb by yourself, you are surrounded by so many people who are cheering you on. I was always so amazed and impressed to see campers encourage each other to keep climbing, even if they had never met before. Even the program, medical and kitchen staff caught the climbing bug! So, even if you know for sure that you aren't part monkey, this does not mean you should abandon your climbing dreams. The Tower is now an official part of Huronda (as well as being the best area around... but then I am slightly biased), and there is nothing to do but practice those knots and go over your climbing ABC's!



Don't look down....Don't look down....

Sarah Ketcheson spent her seventh season at Camp Huronda working at the climbing tower and high ropes course with Jen Hanson. Sarah is currently in her fourth year at the University of Guelph.

My List

By Trevor Smith

I was both a camper and counselor in the early years, but like all readers of this newsletter, I have many fond memories of Camp Huronda. Many of these memories are based upon the many "BIG EVENTS" at Camp - making new friends and reuniting with them each summer, your first cabin group, overnights and canoe trips, Camp Show (always loved Camp Show!), first injection on your own (congratulations!), earning that survival award (which I didn't, but I know some campers who did), making that matchless fire (again, which I didn't and come to think of it, I only know of two people to actually get that fire a flame'n

– Keith Anderson & Dave Montgomery – I'm sure there have been others through the years – let me know), Indian Day, and of course, dances! Many other fond memories derive from those smaller moments, daily routines, or just "camp things" that, in their own Huronda way, always bring a smile to my face when I think of them. OK, here's my list:

- As a counselor, I always loved staff snack and staff meetings! Not just for the food (although peanut butter and toast never tasted so good), but for the chatter and laughter. I know the staff lounge has changed over the years – but in its various forms, I always loved the place. The walls filled with those wonderful Lord of the Ring drawings, couches and chairs in various states of decline, the Camp Two-Week Schedule posted in the corner, that piece of toast pinned to the wall (is it still hanging there?), and upon arriving in the evening from putting your cabin group to rest (you hope!), the sounds of guitar and songs. Taken together, it was a great place to be at the end of the day!
- Lining up for breakfast. Kind of neat if you think about it. Harfoots would be waiting the longest. If it was cool that morning (those late August Camp D mornings), campers and staff alike would be wearing socks on their hands. Mike Bruce & Dave Anderson would stroll up the hill long after the breakfast bell had rung (looking not quite awake) from their waterfront cabin. Sing songs before entering the dining hall, then "dig in!"
- Returning the canoes from the campfire after Indian Day. At the end of the campfire, the canoes, paddled over by members of the North Tribe, would be returned to the waterfront docks by volunteer paddlers. Silently paddling at dusk on Waseosa was always a magical time, especially if there was a full moon out – the camp and its lights, sounds of campers running back and forth between snack and their cabins, presented a whole new perspective from the water at night.
- Coffee at the Trip Hut.
- That pink toilet seat. Is it still there hanging up in the costume cupboard? Who brought that up to camp? How many times was that seat used in a camp skit or to introduce an evening program?
- Camp People in general – they are the best! When I look through my photo album, the many pictures of moments and people at Huronda always bring a smile to my face. And for many of the pictures, I actually still do remember the event, the program, what was going on at the time. I have many fond memories of Camp Huronda, of both BIG events and of the many small, significant events!

My List

I'm sure it wouldn't take long, for every one of us who has been fortunate enough to attend Camp Huronda, to list the multitude of things the experience has taught us. Or maybe it would... This is my list.

I can speak in front of large groups. I can be silly in front of strangers. I can say hi to someone I don't know and look them in the eye. I can sing any camp song at the drop of a hat, on a bus, at a party, in the shower. I can give out warm fuzzies, hugs, smiles, to anyone without thinking twice. Camp has taught me to be comfortable and completely at ease in interviews (thanks Heather). It has taught me to appreciate our environment. It has taught me to communicate, to be a team member, to be honest and outspoken. It has made me believe that my opinion matters. Camp has taught me to be a good listener, a loyal friend and a performer. I have learned to be a story-teller, a singer, an actress. I became an artist at camp, able to create masterpieces out of sand, and bits of string. I learned to be confident, self assured and take initiative. I learned about horses, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, and fire-building. I am good at all of those things and have really cool awards to prove it! I was taught to put a worm on a hook, stern a canoe, do my Around-the-World (still). I can sleep in a cabin, a tent, and under the stars with spiders, mosquitoes and bats! I developed a good sense of humour, and learned to appreciate a good laugh, even at my own expense. I learned to love the rain, in my hair, on my clothes, in my shoes. I discovered the cure for the blues, and sing to feel happy. I write poetry for fun. I have learned to be organized, tidy and helpful. I have learned to love.

I am reminded of a staff member reading a legend on the hill during Native Day. It is the one about the brave who travels far into the wilderness and is told to bring back something that is beautiful. He brings back only his memories. I have thousands of photographs of my experiences at camp. I rarely look at them, but daily I see vivid images of camp in my mind. I can't always remember 3 days ago, but Camp memories are forever etched on my soul. Here's to camp and all that it is still teaching me...26 years after my first day!

Layout and editing by Sean McCammon.
Thanks to all who contributed to this issue of the Huronda Hobbit!.

Thanks to Mike Last for many of the great photos.

If you would like to share any memories about Huronda, we would like to hear from you.

Send your Huronda Hobbit contributions to Sean at: kands@golden.net, or call him at: (519) 579-8274.

Changes in address can also be forwarded to Sean.

Over 2000 satisfied readers!