

Killarney LODGE 2015



Welcome!

When Killarney Lodge was built 80 years ago, Highway 60 was just a gravel road. Guests, mostly fishermen, slept in tents on platforms, or in small log cabins. Meals were sometimes prepared on open fires, and outhouses were considered a convenience.

It was 1935: Canada was in the throes of the Great Depression. A gallon of gas cost 10 cents and if you could afford it, a new car set you back as much as \$625.

Thanks to Benny Goodman, people were discovering swing music. Penguin published the first paperback novels and Parker Brothers patented Monopoly. Who could've imagined rap music, e-readers and electronic games?

As stewards of Killarney Lodge for more than 30 years, we've done our best to stay true to the original vision. We've added, renovated, updated and redecorated – but the original log buildings are still standing. The menu has changed, but the dining room, including the retro-chic (or just plain retro?) chairs, is much as it was 80 years ago.

After all these years, our favourite compliment from returning guests is still “It's the same – but better!” We hope you'll agree.



Lodge founders Sylvia and Burt Moore with their grandson.

Breaking the ice

Another familiar face on opening weekend is landscape and nature photographer Andrew Collett, who says spring is the perfect time to photograph Algonquin Park. Every year he leads a three-day photography workshop from the Lodge.

Ice was still on the water when Andrew's 10-year-old, Michael, decided to try swimming at Rock Lake. He ran in, shouting and beating his chest – and ran right out again.

While some claim polar-bear swims are a Canadian rite of passage, don't believe them! Just five minutes in icy water and hypothermia sets in. (Young Michael was quick; all he got was a nosebleed.)



A lodge of their own

Running a lodge in Algonquin Park often reminds us that 'ownership' and 'boundaries' are flexible terms. Sometimes, though, we must take a stand. Beavers eat leaves, twigs, bark and roots, but they build their dams and lodges with branches. Branches they can reach only after taking a tree down.

Despite having trees all around the lake to choose from, last autumn a clan of beavers fixated on our lot. After taking several small trees, they started on one of our oldest trees, the birch between Cabins 11 and 15. That's where we drew the line.

While the beavers worked on the old birch, Rosemary and Sharon raced ahead, wrapping chicken wire around the trunks of what we considered our most desirable trees.



Our shoreline, redesigned by a determined beaver clan.

Working in shifts, the toothy invaders took almost two weeks to cut down the 40-foot birch. After temporarily storing their booty under the new dock, they built their lodge across the bay. All that remained of the tall tree was a long pole half submerged in the lake.

National Geographic says beavers are second only to humans in their ability to transform and create their environment. We can certainly vouch for that!

How to make the best of a cabin

Take a cabin that has never made the most of its location, and tear out the interior walls. Move the bathroom from the lakeside to the back. Make the new bathroom bigger and wheelchair accessible. Add a ramp.

Then move the bedroom to where the bathroom used to be, so guests can enjoy the view without having to stand up. Create a sitting room with a big picture window facing the lake. Add a new sofa bed and a matching easy chair. And you're done!

No problem-o. Except for the deadline.

The first guests to reserve Cabin 12 were the Carrs. Mr. Carr uses a wheelchair. The Carrs made a reservation for July, sight unseen. Understandably, they were a little nervous and – for different reasons – so were we.

With everything that winter had thrown at us, our repair and renovation work was behind schedule.

The day before the Carrs' arrival, our guys were painting.

Mere hours before our guests arrived, we were still finishing up. The cabin was ready with just 15 minutes to spare.

“Once the Carrs saw the cabin, they relaxed and had a wonderful time,” says Poppy. “And so did we.”

Water for nothing, and your snacks for free

When Eric took over the Lodge 31 years ago, every Tom, Dick and Harriet could buy gas, boating supplies, snacks and bait at the Lodge. The public as well as guests could rent fishing gear, boats and even a guide.

Business was brisk, but it distracted from Eric's vision of a tranquil retreat. So he shut down the gas tanks, ended the rentals and stocked the Paddle Shop with drinks and snacks for Killarney guests only, on the honour system.

Last year we went a step further. Guests can now pick up snacks, bottled water and juice – as well as treats for chipmunks and ducks – free of charge in the Paddle Shop.

Help yourself!

He keeps reeling 'em in

Most celebrities come to Killarney Lodge to get away from the spotlight, but not Ron James. He's too busy making friends – and fans.

James has worked in film and television since the 1980s, when he joined the Second City revue theatre in Toronto. The Ron James Show ran for five seasons on CBC television.

James is every bit as energetic, good-natured – and mischievous – in person as on stage. He loved posing for pictures, exclaiming, “Let everyone know you saw me here!”

Also an avid fisherman, he caught a good-sized bass on the lake. After making a stab at cleaning it, he admitted needing a little help. We'll cook, but we don't usually clean fish. Luckily for James, Olivia Dunne volunteered.

Olivia is young and quiet but hardly inexperienced – she's been cleaning fish since she was two years old. And she's diplomatic. Seeing his initial effort, she offered the comedian a few tips, “to make it easier next time.”

You can fish for smallmouth bass, perch and lake trout in Lake of Two Rivers, but please note:

- 1) You need a fishing licence to drop your line.
- 2) Live bait is not permitted in Algonquin Park lakes.

Instead, buy worms, rent tackle and get your licence at the nearby Lake of Two Rivers Store. Good luck!



Canadian comedian Ron James wondered if we would cook his catch for him, so we brought him into the kitchen to ask. “It's you!!” hollered our cook, Janice Laroche. “Wait until I tell my husband!”

When the earth moved

Opening the Lodge after a long, cold Canadian winter is like opening a present from an eccentric distant relative: you're never quite sure what you'll find.

Before spring commits to Algonquin Park, nature often sends frozen pipes, heaving walkways and small tunneling creatures that really ought to know better.

Last year we discovered the dining room floor had taken on a dramatic tilt. Groundwater under the building had frozen and expanded to such a degree that the earth literally moved.

We laughed, retrieved rolling objects, and decided to wait. Sure enough, the floor settled by opening weekend.

... then came opening weekend

With the warmer weather we welcomed some, ahem, early-bird guests. (Birdwatchers are usually among the most enthusiastic first-weekend guests.)

Steve Pigeon – yes, that's his name – raced out before dawn and skidded in for breakfast at the last minute. Retired lawyer Denis Donnelly, who came late to birding, recruited his friend Brian Rogers to his new avocation.

Lynn and Donna Scott, sisters from New York State, come every year. Knowledgeable? Yes. Serious? Certainly. But their enthusiasm was infectious.

Our birding guests soon got to know one another, comparing sightings and tips in the dining room, and pulling everyone into the conversation. Before long the birders were setting out together, proving once again that birds of a feather do flock together.



Big yellow taxi

The kitchen staff has a new golf cart! This may not seem like a big deal, but from now on they won't have to drag their feet or find an incline to stop. It also makes moving supplies much easier. You'll notice the new cart – it's bright yellow.



That’s just nuts!

All summer we supply chipmunks with peanuts from the Bird’s Creek Feed Company in Bancroft. In return, “chippies” entertain us while stuffing their cheeks with nuts.

Last year the chipmunks went through 20 sacks or 880 kg of nuts (nearly a ton!) before we ran out just a week before closing. After months of feeding the greedy little charmers, we were willing to let it go – but our guests most definitely were not. So we ordered more peanuts and cast about for a “volunteer” to make the three-hour trip.

Jeff Haines was on a deadline digging Cabin 9’s new drainage system, but he affably swapped his backhoe for a truck to make the 200-kilometre drive.

The chipmunks got peanuts, guests were appeased, and the digging got done on time. Thanks, Jeff!



Grey evening, Lake of Two Rivers
– A.J. Casson (1898–1992)

Artful view on the beach

Our newsletter last year told about a new book purchased for the Lounge: *In the Footsteps of the Group of Seven*. The stunning coffee table book features images of the Group’s iconic paintings with photographs of locations that inspired them.

While staying at the Lodge last summer, photographers/authors Sue and Jim Waddington let us in on a little story that didn’t make it into the book: A.J. Casson and his family stayed at Killarney Lodge several times during the 1940s. Not only that, the Group of Seven painter painted from our beach.

Poppy did a little online research and found three Casson paintings referring to the Lake of Two Rivers. At least two were painted from our bay.

Artists still ask to set up their easels on the beach, while appreciative drivers slow down to take in the view.



Little do they know they’re admiring the same scene that caught A.J. Casson’s eye so many years ago.

Lake of Two Rivers
– A.J. Casson, c. 1945

You can take it with you

Commercial soups and sauces were banned from our kitchen years ago. Last summer commercial sandwich meats met the same fate.

No plastic-wrapped luncheon meats or tinned tuna for our guests. No sirree, Bob. Picnickers will enjoy sandwiches stuffed with roast chicken, prime rib of beef and poached salmon prepared right in our kitchen. Chances are, we made the condiments too.

Vegetarians don’t lose out: hefty veggie sandwiches on premium bread, with gourmet cheeses or slathered with homemade aioli, ensure an enjoyable alfresco lunch.

Our staff can suggest fabulous lunch spots, such as look-outs on the Booth Rock, Centennial Ridges and Provoking Lake trails. Or paddle to Pog Lake and picnic by the water.

Interested? Just order your picnic the night before.

Baking in grandmother’s bunky

When Ella Holstein was a dishwasher at Killarney Lodge in 1970, it was common for staff who lived outside the area to stay overnight. Eventually her little bunky became our bakery.

Forty-five years later, Ella’s granddaughter, Sharon Ronholm, is one of our two bakers. We estimate that last summer alone Sharon made 11,800 shortbread cookies and 300 pecan pies – from scratch – in that little cabin. She’s *definitely* not sleeping on the job.

It doesn’t get much better

Eric is excited. Eric is pumped. Eric is SO ready. Last fall, after a rigorous vetting and training process, he was accepted to join the world’s longest race: the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race.

Twelve identical 70-foot ocean-racing yachts will sail 40,000 nautical miles in eight legs, touching down on six continents and 16 cities. The entire race takes 11 months. Remarkably, anyone, even if they’ve never stepped into a boat, can sign up – if they survive the training program.

Late next October, Eric will fly to Cape Town, South Africa, for Leg 3. He’ll be sailing to Australia in swells up to 80 feet high and winds up to 70 miles per hour. (Oh joy.)

Leg 4 dips south around Australia into the blustery “Roaring Forties” latitudes – “one of the most inhospitable parts of our planet,” the race website says. (More joy.)

After six weeks at home, Eric will rejoin the race for perhaps the toughest section, Leg 6. This leg starts in Qingdao, China, and covers 6,000 nautical miles – in winter (ecstasy!) – and finishes in San Francisco, U.S.A., a month later.

Intrigued? Check out the race at www.clipper-roundtheworld.com.



Eric joins a ‘round-the-world race.

HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

We are most pleased to announce the wedding of Samantha Miglin and Jonathan Odebralski at Killarney Lodge this July. To allow time for preparations and recovery – um, clean-up – the Lodge will be closed July 16-19.

Moving apart, staying close

Welcoming guests who come year after year, watching their children grow up, and sometimes return with children of their own is one of our greatest pleasures.

Over the years – sometimes to their dismay – we’ve written about Samantha, Alexandra, Charlotte and Jonathan. Now in their twenties, they are distinct individuals who often find themselves living and working thousands of miles apart. Yet they remain as close as ever.



Sisters Sam, Al and Char on the town.

Family holidays and special events never fail to bring them together. This summer they’re taking part in Samantha’s wedding, a very special event. Alexandra and Charlotte will both be bridesmaids and Jonathan a groomsman.

Samantha was born the year after Eric took ownership of Killarney Lodge. She’s super-organized, a natural leader who deals well with stress. Which is a good thing, because she planned her wedding while working as a vet in a large Atlanta emergency clinic.

Alexandra is charming, free-spirited and gregarious. Sam relied on Al’s fashion sense to help her choose a wedding dress, and on Al’s social network to find the best DJ. And as our resident expert in social media, Al will also ensure that her sister’s wedding has a strong online presence.

Charlotte’s unique combination of creativity, calmness and wicked sense of humour make her a force to be reckoned with. Sam can rely on her to quietly do what needs doing, keeping her head – and her sense of fun – when all around her lose theirs. Perhaps it’s her theatre experience.

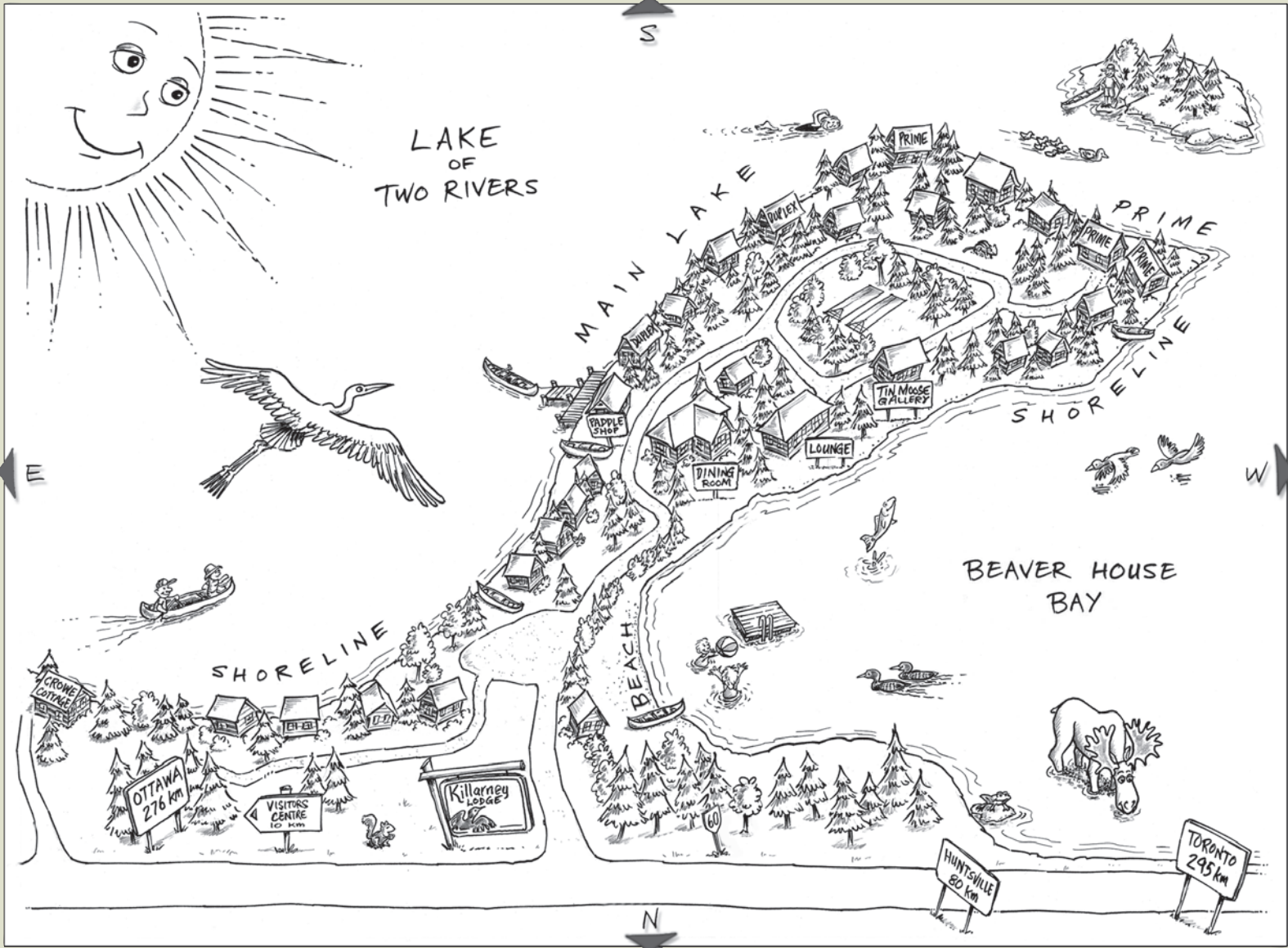
Jonathan carries an abundance of the Miglin charm gene. He’s also a natural mechanical engineer with a talent for fixing things and a gift for prioritizing and organizing. All of which will come in handy

when he’s helping welcome and sort out more than 100 wedding guests.



As you can see, we’re planning a memorable summer. We hope *your* summer plans, big and small, will also be memorable – and include a visit to Killarney Lodge!

Eric & Poppy



Killarney Lodge

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