

Richildaca Campers Enjoy Native Games, Crafts And Nature Lore

BY MARGARET LADE

From humble beginnings 14 years ago as a day camp, Camp Richildaca at Kettleby has grown to accommodate day campers, resident campers, as well as serving year-round as an outdoor education facility for numerous school boards and a teacher-training centre for the faculty of education at the University of Toronto.

Formerly the property of the parents of Jean Babcock, Richmond Street, Richmond Hill, the 25 acre site is now owned by Mrs. Babcock and her sister, Marian Birkholder of Kettleby.

The camp, which operates four two-week camp sessions through the summer, had capacity enrolment in its first three sessions, and places are filling rapidly for the final session, August 12 to 23. It averages over 100 day campers and about 30 residents per session.

Operated jointly by Jean and her husband, Bill Babcock, the camp accommodates children from four to 14 with programs which include swimming, nature lore, camp-craft, canoeing, arts and crafts, Indian lore, astronomy, sports and games, Indian song dance and many other activities.

BUILT POND, POOL

Over the years the Babcocks have constructed a spring-fed pond large enough for canoeing, installed a swimming pool and built cabins which, over the past three years have served as outdoor education centres for schools in Scarborough, Peel, North York, the Borough of York, Metro Roman Catholic School Board, and many schools in the Region of York.

The moving spirit behind the enterprise, Bill Babcock, director of student services at Don Head Secondary School in Richmond Hill, modestly describes himself as "just an employee".

The status of the camp has, however, risen to the point where it has, for the past three years, served as a centre for outdoor education classes for teacher-training. It will be used again in the fall for this purpose under direction of Professor William Simons and Jack Passmore of the U of T's faculty of education.

TEACHES TEACHERS

It has also been used for 17 outdoor education workshops for teachers and pupils of York County under joint sponsorship of the committee for development of outdoor education in York County and the department of planning and development of York County Board of Education.

Thornhill Burglar Caught In Act

The camp is also used extensively by youth groups, such as Guides and Scouts. Through the summer, in addition to the camps for younger children, Richildaca has a training program for 14 to 16 year-olds who might be interested in becoming camp counsellors or playground supervisors.

A liberal sprinkling of graduates of the counsellor-in-training program have gone on to become counsellors at Richildaca and other camps, says Babcock.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Outdoor education, whether through the camp experience, or as a concentrated program under school sponsorship, plays an important

part in the overall educational experience, he maintains. At Don Head alone 247 students have chosen it as an option, and five teachers at the school are participating in the program, not only at Richildaca, but in the community at large. An outdoor theatre provides a facility for developing and demonstrating musical and dramatic skills.

It is the hope of these teachers and others like them that the Ministry of Education will view with favor a written submission outlining a curriculum for outdoor education and approve it as a credit course for secondary school students.

VARIED PROGRAM

Meanwhile campers are enthusiastically participating in widely diversified summer program, which places special emphasis on nature lore. There are trout to be caught in the spring-fed stream, to be cooked over an open fire. Young voices are raised in happy song as they paddle their canoes around the pond, and older campers enjoy cookouts, "overnights" and riding at a regulation riding academy nearby.

Most of the youngsters are bused to the site daily, taking along a lunch, and are home at the end of the day (except for the few resident campers).

Campers join tribes when they arrive and construct their own rustic Indian-style forts under direction of their counsellors. Young braves learn songs, chants and dances handed down from Canadian Indians and learn to make anklets, headdresses and artworks which they proudly display to parents on the parents' night held each camp period on the second night of the two-night overnights, entertaining their elders with Indian skits around the council fire.

The playing field has regulation areas for lacrosse, stick ball, archery, tracking and stalking game, and nearby, several farm animals are on hand for the campers to watch and for which they may care.

WATER PROGRAM

Swimming and water safety also play an important part in the camping program. Both Red Cross and Royal Life courses are offered with qualified, experienced instructors. As they progress, they are also taught correct methods of rescue and resuscitation.

Judging from the enthusiasm demonstrated by the participants, there is no time like summer time—at Richildaca.



After several days of training in correct methods of launching, maneuvering and beaching a canoe, campers are tested and awards presented for various levels of proficiency. Preparing to take off on the pond at Camp Richildaca are (left to right) Richard Warren of Richmond Hill, Greg Hamlen of Thornhill, Counsellor Dorian Young of Kettleby and Mike Molyneaux of Aurora.



Campers gather round as Counsellor Dorian Young of Kettleby shows them how to build a camp fire properly. Cook-outs are a highlight of camping sessions at Richildaca.



(Photo by Claus Plock)

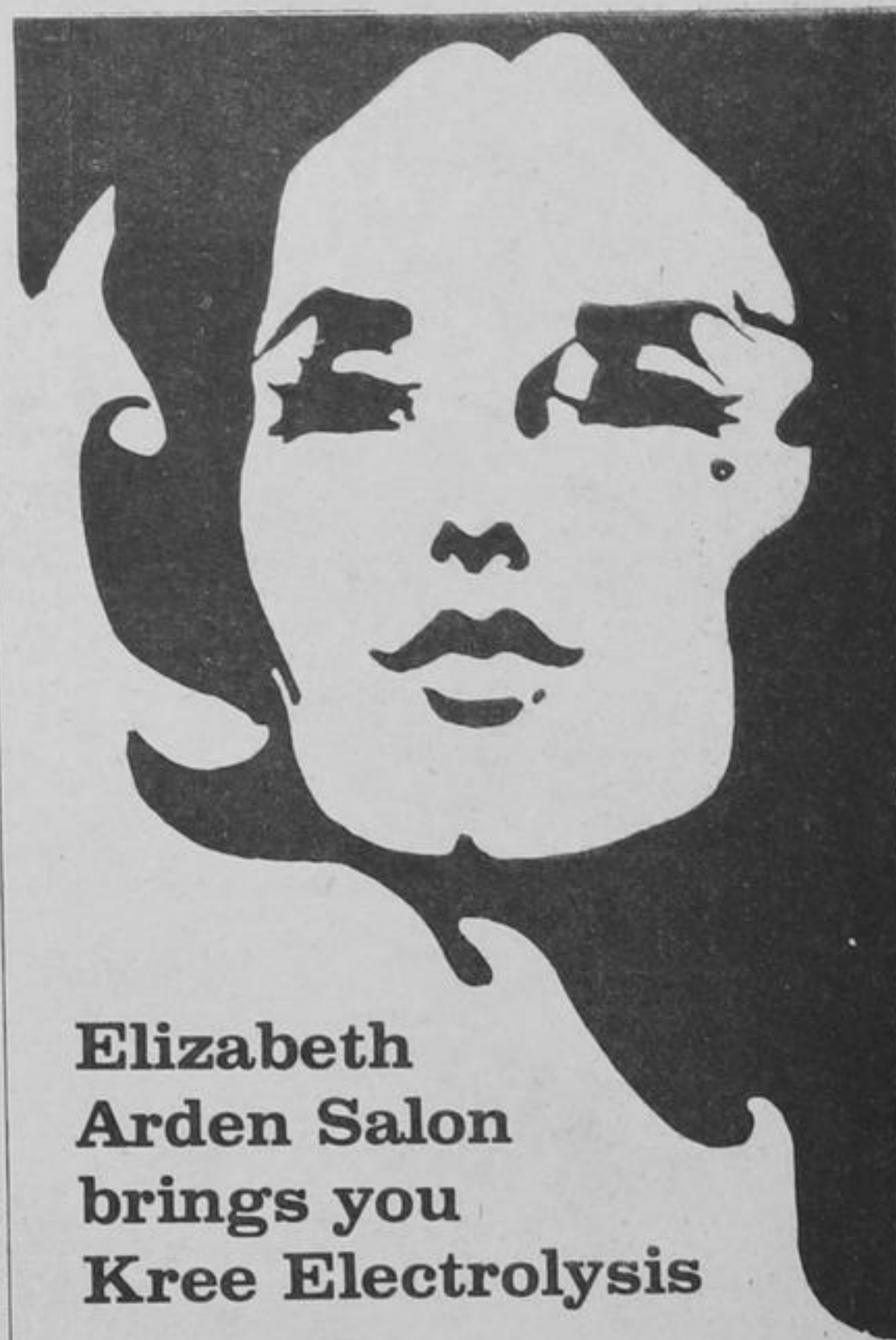
Red Cross and Royal Life courses in swimming, survival, resuscitation and water safety are offered in the heated pool at Richildaca with fully qualified, experienced instructors. At the end of each two-week camp session dozens of awards are presented in categories from pre-beginner to Royal Life. Water games are also a part of the program and help the young campers gain confidence in their abilities.

Markham Man Gets Fellowship

Ronald Keeble 24 of Markham is one of 63 university students from Ontario who have been awarded Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation fellowships for graduate studies in various fields of urban, community and regional affairs. The fellowships, offered under the National Housing Act, are to promote training which will create a better understanding of urban and regional affairs.

Mr. Keeble will be studying "Policy Planning" at York University as he works toward a Master of Environmental Studies expected in 1976. The fellowship carries a stipend for a 12-month academic year of \$4,200, pays for university tuition fees and an allowance for dependent children, if any.

The fellowships can be applied to a broad range of studies including housing, design, community facilities planning, transportation planning, urban and regional administration, urban sociology, urban geography, environmental studies, regional sciences and other related fields.



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