



# WOOD BOX

Annual magazine for Friends of Silver Lake  
December 2020





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Summer 2020  
Spring & Summer 2021



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Tributes



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60 Years!

## MISSING: Staff from the Past!

Were you on staff way back in the day or even more recently? We are building a “Staff Alumni” list and would love to reconnect with everyone who has worked or volunteered at Silver Lake. If you have a connection to this special place, go to the home page of our website and fill out the form to let us know how and when you were involved at camp. You can also use this form to input your current contact info and let us know if you want to be added to the “Friends of Silver Lake” mailing list. As we head into SLMC’s 60th Anniversary next year, there will be some fun opportunities that you won’t want to miss!

Visit [slmc.ca](http://slmc.ca) home page and fill out **Contact Form**



## Greetings from the SLMC Board!

What a strange and busy year it has been! It was a painful decision to cancel in-person summer camp, but the transition to online Camp@Home revealed what an innovative, phenomenal staff we have. Their unflagging energy, creativity and positivity made this summer a whole lot more fun and meaningful for a lot of kids. As a Board, we are also so grateful to Karen for her remarkable leadership during an incredibly challenging time. We are confident, going forward, that we will continue to offer our SLMC community the richest programming possible no matter what the circumstances.

On the board, we said an appreciative goodbye to our Chair, David Lobe, and our MCEC representative, Wendy Janzen, and we have welcomed Mark Modolo and Edna Bejarano to the team! As Board Chair, I want to thank our whole SLMC family for continuing to support camp. We feel the strength of our community now more than ever.

CHRISTINA REIMER, BOARD CHAIR

## *Silver Lake is missing you!*

Thank you for being part of Silver Lake in unique ways this year, and for all your support. I thank God for the resiliency of staff; the energy of campers; unstoppable volunteers and such a solid, courageous board.

Sadly since the last issue of the Woodbox, some pillars of Silver Lake have passed on. Take time to read tributes to Henry Pauls, Annie Bergen, Dennis Dick and John Cornies, and give thanks for the people who have gone before.

2021 will be a time to reflect on the past, present and future of Silver Lake with 60th anniversary events and the “60 Years” fundraising campaign celebrating Silver Lake’s story. Building up monthly donors and a new CILT cabin will help Silver Lake thrive well into the future. You’ll see many old and new photos through these pages. See if you can find a picture of the new slide!

Many have asked how Silver Lake is doing financially given the challenges of COVID. Thanks to your generous support, I am thrilled to say that the 2020 budget is on track and planning is well underway to bring the magic of Silver Lake to life in the year ahead. Thanks be to God.

KAREN CORNIES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## Who are the Friends of Silver Lake?

This group is made up of donors, volunteers, staff alumni, camper parents, and others who want to stay in touch with Silver Lake. Those on the *Friends of Silver Lake* mailing list receive email communications about camp news, fundraising initiatives, work weekends, retreats, etc... There is only one paper mailing per year — the Woodbox newsletter. If you would like to join this group and get updates from camp, please email [fun@slmc.ca](mailto:fun@slmc.ca) with your current contact info OR fill out the **Contact Form located on our website**.

If you would like to be taken off this list and no longer receive updates, please email [fun@slmc.ca](mailto:fun@slmc.ca).



# Summer 2020

This past summer was like nothing we had ever seen at Silver Lake. Due to Covid-19 we unfortunately had to close for the summer but camp continued! We quickly found that our community could still be fostered over Zoom. We offered 7 weeks of Camp@Home and 5 weeks of CILTs. We welcomed over 200 campers and many friends joined weekly campfires!

Spring Outdoor Education staff put together a fantastic opening Zoom campfire for the Silver Lake community. More than 90 friends of Silver Lake signed on that night, and many continued to do so week after week. Classic camp songs were sung live or played through past SLMC recordings, and skits were performed with the clever use of Zoom virtual backgrounds and fun costumes. Usually at camp, during our last song of the night, all campers and staff hold hands. This became a tradition of Zoom campfires! Campfire goers crossed their arms during the last song to emulate holding hands together at camp, creating a link of arms across the Zoom screen.

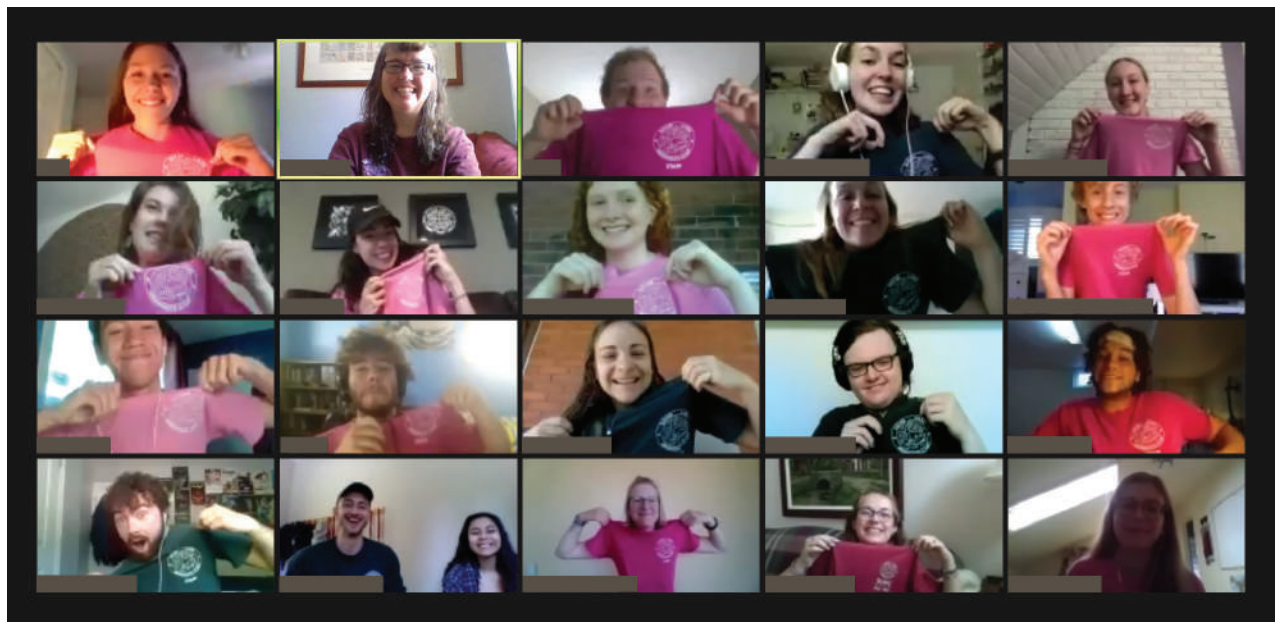
Zoom allowed us to get creative with programming. We introduced the first-ever SLMC Book Club where campers and staff read Kenneth Oppel's *Inkling* together, the highlight being a guest appearance from Ken himself!

The CILT program was a 5-day experience with various CILT sessions. CILT groups continued the tradition of leading CILT campfires! CILTs were also able to go into the Zoom cabins for a few sessions to interact with campers and shadow counsellors.

Staff adapted classic sessions and while that was challenging, being online allowed for new activities that wouldn't happen at camp. One example of this is online escape rooms and choose-your-own adventures. Staff helped campers navigate puzzles and decisions. Through teamwork, discussion, and compromise, they eventually figured out clues and reached a surprise ending!

All in all, summer was a success! We missed being at camp with staff and campers, but are beyond grateful that Silver Lake continued in some capacity this summer. Thank you to all who joined us and who continued to foster the camp spirit during this time that we will never forget.

SARAH PLANT & ROBERT MACGREGOR, ASSISTANT DIRECTORS 2020



# 2021@SLMC

## Summer 2021 information is on the website!

**NEW THIS YEAR:** Silver Lake is coming to you!! Day camps in Waterloo, Toronto, Hamilton and Leamington are confirmed. As more day camps are confirmed they will be added to the website so stay tuned! Reservations for off-site day camps open December 15th.

Reservations for overnight camps will open February 1 at 7am. Check the website for the summer schedule.

As we all know, camps might not be able to run depending on COVID, so no fees will be collected until April at the earliest. At least 2 weeks notice will be given before fees are due. Until that time there is no penalty for opting out of any given camp. We would ask that you only reserve a spot if you are seriously considering any given camp.

CILT information and applications are available on the website.

Reach out to [karen@slmc.ca](mailto:karen@slmc.ca) for more info.

Check out [www.slmc.ca/camp](http://www.slmc.ca/camp) and watch email for updates.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**January 15-17** – Fathers and Kids

**January 29-31** – Winter Snowshoe Hike

**February 5-7** – Women's Silent Retreat

**February 19-21** – Couples Retreat

**March 14-20** – March Family Getaway

**May 8** – The Grand Paddle

More info at:  
[www.slmc.ca/retreats](http://www.slmc.ca/retreats)



SLMC staff can't wait to welcome everyone back!

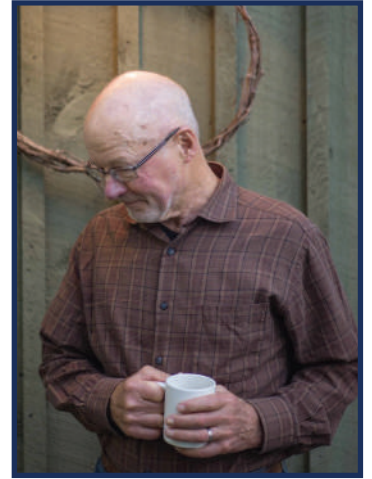


Consider supporting Silver Lake as part of seasonal giving. **Visit the Ways to Give page at [slmc.ca](http://slmc.ca).**

Check out the Silver Lake Wish List there where you can purchase kitchen items, camping & sporting equipment and other things needed at camp. Lots of different items to choose from on the Wish List!



# Tributes



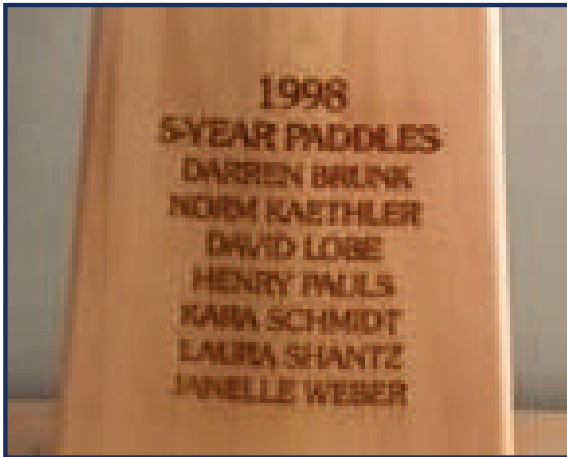
**Henry Pauls' (1938-2020)** legacy at Silver Lake reaches so far and wide that we lovingly referred to him as “Silver Lake royalty.” Adirondack chairs are all around camp— a symbol of the peaceful moments camp can bring. Over the years Henry built these chairs with campers and staff.

Henry was a board member, staff and volunteer. From 1994-2003 he was Camp Administrator, overseeing construction of The Pines, staff cabins, volunteer cabins, the new kitchen and the Wash House renovation. He participated in most Friends of Silver Lake canoe trips or Adirondack Hiking Trips during that time. He was at some Work Weekends from 1960-1994 then hardly missed one until 2017. He reminisced about traveling with fellow students from Guelph to camp around 1961 and nailing cedar shakes on a round picnic shelter, sleeping in canvas tents in a field surrounded by cows and considering it a luxury to have mosquito free meals!

Eventually, with campers from Arts and Adventure Camp and volunteers, Henry designed and built a new Gagaball court which is still very much in use today.

At the first virtual Silver Lake campfire, Henry and Nancy were there (photo below). So many were moved to tears to see Henry and Nancy stepping into this new world, the future of Silver Lake.

We miss Henry already — his unfailing kindness, gentleness and support — and are incredibly blessed to have known him.



**John Cornies (1940-2020)** began helping out at Silver Lake even before there were buildings at camp, sleeping in a tent in the field while at camp. As The Pines was being built, insulation was needed in a small crawl space under the building, a horrible job, but John jumped in to do it. Later, The Pines needed pine boards nailed in at the top so John got on the scaffolding to do it. He pitched in from top to bottom!

John worked in and on the kitchen, he was a counsellor in the 70s and was often part of Paddle the Grand. For many years Hamilton Mennonite Church has taken on a work project at weekend retreats and John would help with whatever needed doing.

Starting in 2017 John volunteered to drive for outtrips. He was great with a canoe trailer. He loved driving, especially the CILTs, and spoke often of how the CILTs gave him hope for the future. As his daughter-in-law I had the gift of seeing his love for camp up close and will miss leaning on him for guidance about all things Silver Lake.

KAREN CORNIES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
(with help from Ed Enns and Edgar Rogalski)



**Dennis Dick (1953-2020)** was part of Silver Lake Camp from the early days. As a teenager and young adult, along with others from Niagara, he spent many weekends “retreating” to camp. In the early days programming was not so structured, yet he felt deep spiritual connections with the setting of camp.

I first came to Silver Lake for the Spring Clean Up in May of 1999, when Dennis invited me to help. Both of us were fathers of teenaged children, so the trip to camp was a “truck load” of people and equipment. Dennis worked with heavy duty equipment, and specialized in installing and inspecting septic systems. Among many other volunteers, Dennis lent his skills to build and maintain physical operations of Silver Lake.

Over the years’ friendships of working to improve the camp facilities became strong. Along with Rudy and Herb he often helped shingling roof tops. Stringing wires, Chris sometimes needed assistance. Tim worked to repair screens or replace windows. Andrew typically oversaw a major project, often with Henry, while Jake or Jamie found odd jobs to check off the list.

Dennis? He was repairing fences, digging a waterline, tearing down an old building, or putting a new one up, and it was all about teamwork. It was all about having the camp ready for a summer season of sharing in the lives of others.

RANDY KLAASSEN, FRIEND OF SILVER LAKE





## Ma Hubbard (1924-2020) aka “Ma”, aka Anne Bergen (Saunders) née Thiessen

Anne Bergen and her husband Henry were ardent supporters of Silver Lake. She felt that camp could play an important role within the Christian community. To that end, she sent her eldest son to the initial camps at Chesley Lake and her other 2 sons to Silver Lake as they became older. She spent numerous work weekends there as new buildings were erected in the early 60s and served as a board member. But most significant was volunteering to cook for the boy’s camp during the first 10 years of Silver Lake.

She never planned to be camp cook, but when unexpectedly asked to help for the first year in 1962, she agreed. She recruited sister-in-law, Elvira Thiessen to help and the adventure began. She audited a food handling course to understand food safety. The first year she cooked on an apartment size gas stove and used a “Coke” cooler for a refrigerator to feed 66 campers. There was no electricity or running water. When water ran out, she’d ask campers or staff to pump more into the holding tank. As the camp grew, she was very appreciative of her Garland stove and also not having to sleep in a tent trailer.



When a camp nickname was needed for the early staff, she smilingly chose “Ma Hubbard” after the nursery rhyme. Over the years the name was affectionately reduced to just “Ma”. She was passionate about food and tried hard to have varied, tasty meals from breakfast to evening snack. She adjusted menus to suit donations, including fruit and vegetables sent with campers. Ma was proud of using fresh milk, butter and real whipping cream while working with a tight budget.

Along with good food, she brought to camp her sunny and fun loving disposition. She had a warm spot for younger campers and tried to encourage them when they were homesick. She always attended the nightly camp fire, enjoying the skits, pranks and sing songs. She grinned when campers assigned to peeling potatoes would carve in their initials, in hopes of being served them at supper. She enjoyed working with the many kitchen volunteers, welcoming them with a big smile.

Ma was flexible and adapted to changes in daily schedules. When things went wrong she instituted quick solutions like using a campfire to heat soup when the propane tank ran out just before lunch. To create a bit of a break for the cooks, she helped instigate a mid-week beach wiener roast after the daily swim at Sauble Beach.

One testament to her love of Silver Lake and her time as cook was that she kept her name tags for more than 50 years.

KARL BERGEN, FRIEND OF SILVER LAKE



1961 – Boys Camp



1998 – Work on Staff Cabin 2



1990s – Woodworking at Arts & Adventure



1978



1968 – Girls Camp



1995 – Washhouse Renovation



1998 – Retreat



1984



# Paddles



## 5th Years:

**Lorena Diller Harder**  
**Kat Forsyth**  
**Kat Klassen**  
**Laura Moolenbeek**  
**Sarah Plant**  
**Graham Steinman**  
**Jacob Steinmann**  
**Jonah Thiessen**



*2020 fifth years were a hard-working group of leaders dedicated to camp. This high-energy group is welcoming, passionate, and a little silly.*

***Thank you fifth years!***



***Dylan Siebert*** received a lifejacket to recognize ten seasons of work at Silver Lake.  
***Thank you Dylan!***

***One of the toughest parts of camp directing is recruiting the right staff.***

I am constantly in awe of the people I was fortunate enough to work alongside at Silver Lake. Retention of gifted leaders is tough at a non-profit camp. One of the first things I did at Silver Lake was toss out the payscale which paid staff by position and move to one where everyone was paid based on years of experience and post-secondary education. That allowed Silver Lake to pay staff in university more, allowed staff to do jobs they loved and were good at without suffering financially and allowed positions to be changed throughout the summer.

After a few years it was obvious staff were able to work longer. As the first staff crossed the 5 summer mark, I thought it would be good to recognize their contribution and so began the tradition of the 5-year paddle. It was tricky at first, since no one knew it was coming. Getting the right paddle length for each person meant surreptitiously sitting beside them to gauge their height and arm length.

My dad and Uncle Frank (Steingart) volunteered the next summer to make bookshelves for the fireplace. We added the small paddles with the names of staff who had received their paddles. We thought the fireplace seemed to have lots of room. Whoops.

I had the pleasure of returning to camp ten years ago to see Courtney receive her paddle. I took a walk down by the lake. Sitting on the dock, thinking back 40 years, I could see myself paddling across that lake with Rob Neufeld or Dennis Wiens and hear us still, “My paddle’s keen and bright, flashing with silver...”

**JIM PENNER, FORMER DIRECTOR**

The paddle has been a long-standing tradition, and this year’s fifth years join many others who have contributed years of service to Silver Lake.



**1998 – the year this year’s fifth years were born!**



**2010 – Courtney and Jim Penner**



**2000 Paddles**



# Then and Now







# 60th Anniversary Celebrations!

This is a real camp photo from 1969! Pictured in the open door is Peter Pauls, who was director with Ella Pauls in 1974.

## Silver Lake Mennonite Camp Day is February 1!

Wear SLMC clothes from years past and share them with our community using **#SLMCis60**

Anniversary events will be on the Silver Lake website at [slmc.ca/60th-anniversary](http://slmc.ca/60th-anniversary) as they are confirmed. Be on the lookout for church connections, hikes, and don't forget The Grand Paddle on **May 8th!**





## John Enns has connected with camp for over 65 years and is looking forward to volunteering next summer!




Silver Lake is still a great Christian leadership development organization with lots of singing and friendship. I helped develop many organizations over my life but Silver Lake is the most important to me.


As a teen in the mid 50's, I helped organize weekend Youth Retreats at Chesley Lake, but we wanted our own camp and purchased the Silver Lake property. I was a Counsellor in the first days at our Chesley Lake Camp where we swam, hiked, cared for tents, tied knots, built fires, and did games, crafts and singing. In 1964, when Boys and Girls Camps were separate, I was the Boys Camp Director at the new property. When our children, Jerry and Mary, were of camp age, I volunteered as Quest Leader, the Christian Education component. I was called "Q!" I withdrew as our children became leaders at camp.

Later in life we participated in Music Camps, focused on singing and pig butchering. Great weekends of new and renewed friendships! Once my grandchildren were in camp, I returned to volunteer where needed and to share the great experience and difference Silver Lake has made in the lives of friends and family.

JOHN ENNS, FRIEND OF SILVER LAKE

Follow SLMC on Facebook and Instagram for updates and fun content from camp!

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## WAYS TO DONATE

To donate **online\***, visit: [slmc.ca/donate](https://slmc.ca/donate)

To donate by **mail**, please send cheques to:  
209-50 Kent Avenue, Kitchener, ON, N2G 3R1

*\*this is our preferred method and tax receipt gets sent immediately!*



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