

Donna and Pete Miedema (*Nemo: 1969 - present*) have spent years camping with their 2<sup>nd</sup> Dundas boys at Nemo. "It's the friendship, the camaraderie, It's the people you meet at Nemo that make camping so worthwhile. Did the rain ever beat us? Yes!! It rained so hard and so long at the C.J. '89 Precamp that we all packed it up and left Sunday morning. We'd had it!"

As Factors since 1974, their most gratifying moments have been those helping strangers to Nemo orient themselves to Camp. "It's wonderful seeing them leave later as confident "Nemo-ites"

They remember the year Dundas Scouts hosted 20 Japanese Scouts at Nemo.

One of the funniest moments was watching Bill Truax shinny up the flagpole in 1981 to retrieve the flag when the line broke.

Don Spong (*Nemo: 1952 - present*) loves to tell about standing on the top of "the big hump" in the floor of old B.P. Lodge surrounded by 35 to 40 Cubs. It was easy to give the daily instructions. You just had to rotate through 360 degrees!

Like other leaders, Don also believes that kids really don't know their leaders until they have been to camp together.

Ed Gawley was a District Field Commissioner with Gord Williams from 1951 to 1954. He tells of the swimming pool they dug in those early years. It didn't work any better than the Bronte Creek attempts. It took water from Nemo Creek but the silting was so bad that it was soon abandoned. He remembers: tomato soup at all of the winter camps which was heavily spiked with pepper to keep everybody warm; moving K.Y.B.O.'s - "I always felt sorry for the guys at the back as they would invariably end up with a soaker"; a springtime P. L. Training Camp where the Scouts were told to pack up in a hurry as they were being trucked north to fight forest fires. The true destination was Blue Springs with no fires but with a great program lined up for them. When setting up their tents, they found that they had all forgotten to remove the strips of flypaper hanging inside, "Have you ever tried to remove that stuff from a tent?"

Tony Sarson (*Nemo: 1946 - 1952*) said, "Gordie Williams had me working on one project or another all of the time. The only way I got rid of him was to get married. It was pure bliss no more 8 day weeks working at camp for Gord!"

Matthew Horyn (*Nemo: 1980 - present*) says that, "As a Cub, Mount Baldy was like Mount Everest! It took us about 4 days to get to the top!"

His fondest memories of Nemo are as a Venturer Advisor, especially on Victoria Weekend Camps canoeing and rafting on the spring flood waters of Bronte Creek or on John Harbour's ingeniously planned night hikes especially the one where the thickest fog in history descended on 100 Venturers just after they'd been dropped off at various points miles from Camp and told to find their way back. The result was that Operation Retrieval was established where all the Venturer Advisors burned up tanks of gas before getting everybody home again. Other favourite activities include caving on Mount Nemo and rock climbing on Rattlesnake. Matthew said, "Camp Nemo is not only a great camp in itself but a great base from which to range out over the countryside".



*Archery at Camp Nemo - Victoria Day - date unknown*

Tom Booth (*Nemo: 1979 - present*) and Jay Prodder (*Nemo 1996 - present*), Scout leaders with 5<sup>th</sup> Ancaster, were 1970's Beavers, Tom locally and Jay in St. Catharines. Nemo has always meant fun to Tom. He says he spent all his spare cash at the Tuck Shop and remembers getting so sick on candy and junk food that his mother, Janis (4<sup>th</sup> Ancaster Leader) had to come and take him home! Jay finds it hard to believe that such a wonderful facility exists so close to urban centres. He's impressed with the mammoth organizational structure in support of the theme approach to our Victoria Day Weekends. He says he has never seen anything like it before.

Chris Kivell (*Nemo: 1979 - present*) as a Lynden Beaver in 1979 thought Nemo was a huge endless place. As a Rover today it seems much smaller to Chris who says, "I think it's more used today. There's more room for a fuller, richer level of activities and Doc Vaughan's Conservation Plan is going to make it even better!" To talk to Chris is to sense a strong element of Camp ownership within him.

Chris said the 2 Australian Rovers who visited Nemo at the time of our May 1997 Victoria Day Weekend were, "blown away and Tim Horton's is only 5 minutes drive away!"

Liz James and Janis Booth (*Nemo: 1984 - present*) remember, as Venturer mothers, being invited by John Harbour to drive kids to camp in 1984. They recalled that No. 2 Sideroad was still a gravel road. It was hard surfaced in 1985. John then invited him to join him as leaders in the 4<sup>th</sup> Ancaster Venturer Company which was co-ed. John told them, "It will only take you a few hours a week." They still laugh over that line.

Little did they realize in 1984 that the magic of Scouting and especially of Nemo would lead them to become joint Camp Chiefs for the Venturer Subcamp at Victoria Day 1997. They found that the non-mom aspect of being leaders of their own kids (6 in all eventually), especially in the casual outdoor surroundings of camp has been a most rewarding experience. They stated, "You become close to your children in a different way."

They tell of one winter camp where they had to help a leader find his way back to his campsite after getting lost at the back of the camp. It gave them each great satisfaction, as the lost leader was the veteran John Harbour.

According to Bev Tice, Janis Booth, Bev Carey and Liz James one of the greatest things about Nemo is the wonderful moment when you get home on a Sunday afternoon home from Nemo and settle into a bath with hot, running water and shampoo!. The next greatest thing is a stove and a dishwasher.

Brian Winchester (*Nemo: 1986 - present*) has done it all through Beavers, Wolf Cubs, Scouts, Venturers and now Rovers. His first Nemo experience was as a Cub at Cub Fun Day 1986 with its Treasure Island theme. In 1996 he again attended Cub Fun Day with the 21st Hamilton Rover Crew who constructed a 2-stilt tower about 50 feet high for the Cubs to climb.

Gord McLean (*Nemo: 1982 - present*) was a Scout with Dan Peace at the 44th Hamilton Troop, located at St. Giles United Church. He was later a leader with Dan. Nemo was always a favourite camping spot for the 44th and it follows that when Gord became the Mate to the 21st Rover Crew, the Crew centred its activities around Nemo.

Gord and Brian, both strong on lashing and pioneering, constructed an amazing array of towers and platforms for the June 1, 1997 camp reunion. For Brian, Nemo is definitely his home away from home. He said, "It's all here, everything you want from rock climbing to rafting. Watching the salmon run in Bronte Creek is just plain amazing!"



*Preparing Dinner at Pod 4 on a Klondike Gold Stage Hike - Date Unknown*

#### OVERHEARD IN THE RAIN AT JUNE 1, 1997 CAMP REUNION

1st Old-timer: "The camp sure is different to what it was 50 years ago!"

2nd Old-timer: "Weather's about the same, though!"

For Terry Lloyd (*Nemo: 1955 - present*) Scouting is a family affair. He has a cherished picture of his dad as a Scout Leader, his brother as a Scout and himself as a Cub. Nemo can be a cold spot according to Terry. He recalls staying in B.P. Lodge as a Cub: "You just couldn't get warm!"

Later, as a Scout, he tells how they would place a metal sheet across the front of an Adirondak with a roaring fire against it on the outside: "and we still froze inside!"

Todd Martin (*Nemo: 1969 - present*) feels that Nemo helps groups like his, the 31st Hamilton at Delta United Church, develop as a family. When their Cub Camp featured a medieval theme, the Rovers dressed up as a horrible dragon who carried off a beautiful princess and tied her up to a tree in the forest. The Venturers, as King Arthur's knights led the Cubs on a rescue mission to save the princess and behead the dragon. Finally, the slain dragon spewed forth dragon eggs (Donut Bits) and other mug-up goodies. "No place can bring kids together like Nemo", says Todd.



*Dog Sled Presentation during a Klondike Weekend - early 1990's*

Five 4th Ancaster Venturers with an average of 9 Nemo years each to their credit were asked why the camp was so important to them. Here's what they said:

- "It's a wonderful place to get away from brothers, sisters and parents"
- "It's a great place to meet new people"
- "You really feel close to nature at Nemo"
- "It's a getaway where you can't get into trouble like you can back home and you are free to do the things you chose"
- "Nemo is a place where you can help others and it is always appreciated"
- "It's a place where you can accept responsibilities that aren't possible at home"
- "It's a place of fun: fun learning new skills; fun interacting with others; fun for not being criticized all the time for what you do"

"Makes going home to family a fresh start affair. You have actually got something to talk about again, at least for a little while!"

## **AFTER THE REUNION...**

Following the reunion on June 1, 1997, the celebration of the 50th Anniversary and the completion of this book were far from over. Jim Russell continued to collect stories, and people continued to tell them!

## **FROM NEMO TO THE KLONDIKE GOLD FIELDS**

1997 marked the 100 year anniversary of the famed Klondike Gold Rush in the Yukon. Thousands of people from around the world backpacked the rugged Chilcoot Pass as part of the celebration. Among them was retired 66 year old Jim Hardman whose lifelong passion for hiking and camping was born while a Scout at the 4th Hamilton Troop at All Saints Church. Jim says that he and his buddies took day hikes, night hikes, winter and summer hikes and he will never forget trying to light a fire in the pouring rain with only 2 matches! Before Camp Nemo was officially opened, Jim remembers cycling there and almost breaking a leg when he jumped off a beam in the old barn, missed the straw pile and hit a wooden feed box instead!

The Scouts used Camp Nemo as a base for their rock climbing and cave exploring trips to the "other" Mount Nemo and Rattlesnake Point. They seldom had access to a car and Jim marvels at how they peddled 15 to 20 miles on a one speed bike carrying food, clothing, cooking gear, canvas tent, rubber ground sheet and blankets.



*Rock climbing at Rattlesnake Point - date unknown*

“It was anything but lightweight camping in those days,” said Jim. “The things I learned in those years became a part of my personality: self reliance; making do with what you have; pushing oneself to the limit. That is why I feel totally at home in the bush and the Chilcoat Pass. We’re old friends. After all, this will be my fourth trip over the pass. It is all rooted in my Scouting days around Camp Nemo in the 1940’s”



*Fire lighting skills practised - date unknown*

## **TRAINING AND THE NEXT MILLENIUM**

From day 1, Camp Nemo has been a centre for council training. The first organized camp was held in January, 1947. It was a training for District Patrol Leaders. A Training Lodge was built early on, and although its role changed during the years, the training continued.

In light of the fact that Hamilton Wentworth became a part of the new Battlefields Region extending from Niagara to Brantford in September, 1997, what will be Nemo’s role in the field of training? There was no doubt about it in the mind of Donna Baillie then A.D. C. Training. Donna says, “With one of the best training facilities in Canada, Scouts from across the entire new Region will be looking to Nemo for help in their training. What a great place for courses in “no trace” camping, for example. We will be needing a modern Training Lodge. It is becoming a “must” in the minds of trainers as we head towards the year 2000. Could a Training Lodge be our gift to the next millennium?”



## **SPREADING THE SPIRIT IN SANDS, STONE AND SOIL**

1997 saw sand, stones and soil brought from all our past major campsites and spread at Nemo:

- from the shores of Burlington Bay where our first camps were held,
- from the sand dunes at the site of Camp Tetonkah at Port Maitland on Lake Erie,
- from the Spencer Creek in the Dundas Valley
- from Sulphur Springs in Ancaster.

Cub Keith Miller spread a “bit of Nemo” on Boulevard Lake in Thunder Bay at C.J. ‘97 and returned with sand from its shores for our camp.

An exchange of soils between Nemo and Blue Springs was carried out at the time of the 1997 Gilwell Reunion.

Soil from the Scout House property was also spread at Nemo. According to Beaver Leader Sharon Miller, we need not deliberately carry soil from Nemo back to Scout House because no amount of cleaning will ever eliminate the Nemo soil deposited there by returning campers and their equipment.

Who knows where this will take us. Maybe some day Camp Nemo will be the site of soil, sand and stones from clear across Canada--maybe even the world!

## **GOODBYE SPECTATOR - - WELCOME ANNIVERSARY LODGE**

Labour Day weekend 1997 saw the framing of the walls of Anniversary Lodge. Beside it, and no longer a camping site, Spectator Lodge stood proudly, seeing its last days out as a construction shed for the new building. Four members of the Lethbridge family were part of the volunteer construction crew: George and his sons Mike, Mark and Glenn. Nemo has been a part of the lives of this family almost from the outset. Jean and George, when very young leaders, spent their first wedding anniversary night in 1954 in a pup tent in front of B.P. Lodge. Gord Williams, who was factoring that weekend, knocked on their tent in the

morning with 2 cups of steaming hot tea! As well as pioneering the pack and troop at Emmanuel United Church, Jean and George were very active in the entire Council. Jack Atkinson invited Jean to open and operate our first Scout Shop at Scout House. Her cheery greetings warmed the hearts of all of us. George, on the other hand, involved himself in construction projects at Nemo. In 1977, his 55th Rover Crew laid the railway tie steps down to Hencher Den. These were replaced during the summer of 1997 by the 81st Rover Crew. Gerry Johnston introduced George to log construction which resulted in his building of about 40 % of our 2 Panabodes by himself. As he surveyed all of the power equipment available for the construction of Anniversary Lodge, he laughingly remembered that the Panabodes were built entirely with hand tools. George also recalled how he and Ron Pine, with the sweat pouring down their faces, laid the patio stones around B.P. Lodge during one very hot summer day.

Camp memories are made of stuff like this, and the construction of Anniversary Lodge will supply a million more.



*Commemorative Plaque unveiled at official opening of Anniversary Lodge by Hamilton Wentworth District president David Wands - October 1998*

**COMMENTS ABOUT NEMO FROM SOME OF THE SCOUTERS ATTENDING THE 1997 GILWELL REUNION AT BLUE SPRINGS**

Donna Baillie: Nemo is where my Cubs become Cubs.

Scott Weaver: It's the place where you find the "out" in Scouting at its best.

Lynda Gardner: The Beavers have a ball at Nemo, and some of them now represent the 3rd generation of campers there.

Joan Barty: For tranquillity and peace, the chapel is the best place to go. It lifts loads from the shoulders. (Husband Colin agrees totally)

Pat Troughton: A wonderful place for fellowship and fun. There is a sense of the spiritual there.



Lynda Freeman: You can't beat it for wide open fun and MUD!

Marcel Martel: Because of Apple Day, we have the use of one of the best possible nature camps sitting on our very own doorstep.

Helen Tune: As long as they can handle mud and outwit mosquitoes, generation after generation of kids will find Nemo to be consistently one of the safest and most exciting places for growing up.

Averill Tune: It's wonderful to watch first time campers as they struggle to learn that mom doesn't suddenly appear and come to their help, dirty dishes don't clean themselves and the bathroom is called the K.Y. B.O. What a wonderful adventure awaits kids at Nemo.

Frances Re: Where can you take kids where it is so safe and where they will find few "Do's" and "Don'ts". Let's keep it that way. It's the great adventure.

Lori Carey: It's not only a place of fabulous childhood memories, it's a place where wonderful memories keep on growing!

Jim Carey: The place of a million wonderful memories: many in the kitchen while serving 40 or 400; many in work parties; many around the campfire.

Louise Bushell (nee Scott): My most wonderful growing up memories from Hamilton are Nemo. My 3 kids are in Scouting and my favourite dog for 17 years was called...Nemo! I love bringing Mississauga Groups to Nemo.

Susan Crockford: For the 41<sup>st</sup>, it's a second home and it brings families together like nothing else can. Our family (parents and kids) vacation event at Camp is now a cherished annual affair. It really helps build a sense of community. (Husband Johnmark agrees.)

Florence Patrick: The success of Nemo is rooted in friendship.

Don MacAngus: It's the best place I know to share good Scouting experiences. It is the greatest place to go to reflect and relax.



Bob Provo: If you want a place where you can rest and totally relax, go to Nemo! You can spread my ashes there!

Fran Hopkins: I've seen city Cubs come home from a soggy weekend at Nemo, some wearing wrapping paper because everything else was wet. When you ask them how things went, they tell you they had the adventure of a lifetime.

Doug & Jackie French: Just look at the myriad of courses that have been conducted there over the years! It has got to be one of the best sites for training anywhere in Scouting.

Richard Keast: It's the complete camp. At one end you can run a program while living in a modern lodge. At the other end you can have a wilderness experience, centred around a totally self contained operation.

Ada Bartlett: A great place for hugs!

Bill & Chris McCready: Nemo is a grand mix of the familiar and the unfamiliar. There are always old friends and routines, yet at the same time something new always awaits you.

50th Anniversary Committee: Everyone seems to have in their mind a personal Nemo they can escape to and dream on. That will never change.

