

Camp Grafton Board Chair Report Feb 2019 (looking back at 2018)

submitted by Judy MacPherson

Thankful as always for another safe wonderful year at Grafton, I am amazed at the growth in enthusiasm for camping from the youngsters and their families who come to camp. Grafton had full camps plus a wait list again, with a total of 209 campers last year. Our registrar did a phenomenal job working with a website that gave some trouble (though not as much trouble as it's given us so far in 2019). Excellent coordinators who took care of many many details and responded to emergencies as they came up, were a huge part of the success. Cleanup and maintenance work, sprucing up cabins and grounds, plotting and planning for future development all happened. Rental income helped keep camp afloat as always. Fundraising efforts, prudent financial decisions and kindness of the community continue to bolster camp's coffers.

In compliance with new government regulations Grafton has a new set of bylaws, filed and approved. This took a lot of time and money but now it's done. The camp board may elect to now update its constitution which is also out of date but perhaps not legally as critical as the bylaws.

Camp Grafton now has a 10-year lease with the property owner, Kamloops United Church. I look forward to a closer more trusting relationship going forward now that this is done. Thanks to Doug Springford for his legal wisdom in negotiating the lease. Thanks to Marnie, Florence and others at KUC who like me see Camp Grafton as a valuable ministry of Kamloops United Church.

With aging infrastructure on site at camp, some issues are demanding our attention more than ever. We had to replace a fridge unit with little time and money; thanks to caring community members and board members who got that done. Both bridges across the creek have given all they have and need replacement. Managing fire hazards and downed trees is an ongoing project. The biggest items are of course the dining hall, septic, ablution station and water filtration, all of which will figure largely in next year's final report, I'm sure.

One new event this year was a lightning strike that set a tree on fire during a very hot dry summer. We can be proud that staff training and emergency procedures including communications, were all tested and worked fine. A few tweaks were needed including more pfd's on the beach and a very clear discussion with staff regarding inappropriate use of social media during a camp emergency.

Again this year it was a big challenge to find certain key staff such as first aid and cook. Last minute arrangements were made, with the serendipity that always seems to accompany camp, and Maya became the first aid attendant, Carolyn became the cook, and we moved some of us with a few more grey hairs and a lot of lost sleep after the search.

The thing you can't put in an annual report is the moments of magic that happen at camp and because of camp every year. Many of these moments are unseen except to a very few people, but if you are open to them you will know that they provide a bit of healing in a hurting world. It might be a leader offering kindness and acceptance at just the right time, a new friend found, or a moment of solitary stillness where someone can, like the sign says, "be still and know" that we are in the presence of creation. Camp Grafton continues to be the site of all that goodness and light in a world that needs all the help it can get. I'm thankful that I've had the privilege of working alongside my fellow board members and staff to continue this ministry to our community.