

In Memory of Bernie Cahill

**Written by Jacob Rodenburg
April 2007**

If we think of the voyageurs and the spirit of what they embodied, they always carried much more than the average person. They took pride in shouldering tremendous loads. And just as Dan mentioned, this tenacity and resolve is what sets Bernie apart from so many others.

For example, in 1985, when the YMCA was poised to sell Camp Kawartha to lord knows who, it was Bernie along with several original Board members and Rotarians (several who are with us right now: Don White and John Cockburn) who worked tirelessly to insure that this camp remained in the hands of children. Together they knocked on doors, pleaded for pledges, perhaps even cajoled some and raised \$150,000 to buy Camp Kawartha. Imagine what this space might have been like today, if it wasn't for this determination and vision. Would there have been condominiums, a trailer park, tightly packed cottages?...the mind boggles.

The camp is here today teaching children about nature and environment, about protecting shorelines and habitat, about living responsibly and sustainably, thanks to the hard work and foresight of people like Bernie, Don and John.

Bernie was a board member of Camp Kawartha for 22 years. For 10 years, he was the Chair of our Board of Directors.

When Bernie spoke, invariably what he said was either kind or positive. And when things became financially challenging (as they did), it was always Bernie who reminded us of the big picture, the very reason we were here...to serve children. His voice was always the voice of reason, compassion and compromise.

So we honour Bernie today. We think about his determination to go beyond the ordinary, to do extraordinary things for his community, for example; serving in the Rotary Club of Peterborough and Five Counties Children's Centre and being an active city counselor and of course his tremendous service to Camp Kawartha.

There is a lovely voyageur song that would be worth singing a few bars in Bernie's memory. Very loosely translated it means keep on rolling on.

I'm sure Bernie would want us to smile, swing our loads on our backs and keep on trotting down the trail steadfast and strong, with our minds on service and with the goal of helping others as the final destination for everything we do. And like the Voyageurs and like Bernie, we'll get there in the end.