

Memory lane leads to Camp Wohelo

In celebration of Camp Wohelo's 50th anniversary, the camp is holding an open house event from Sept. 4 to 7.

While the event is open to the general public, Danette Barner, chair of the Camp Wohelo board, hopes many alumni who attended the camp during its early years will attend to help make the celebration a memorable one.

"We want to show everyone how camp has changed and how it hasn't changed. The spirit and sense of camaraderie is still there," says Barner.

Folks interested in attending the event can stay for the entire weekend, part of the weekend or just a few hours by booking a bunk, pitching a tent or parking a trailer.

The event is free, but donations are being accepted.

The residential camp is located at Pigeon Lake and features a number of

different programs geared toward girls and women of all ages.

"We have a Leaders in Training program, junior, teen, and mom and tots camp," Barner describes, adding that the female-only element of Camp Wohelo, with the exception of the mom and tots camp, stemmed from a need to offer an option for girls interested in camping.

"During the 50s, there were a lot of camps available for boys, but not many for girls," she says. "Girls from all walks of life are welcome to join us."

Campers have the opportunity to take part in classic camp activities like canoeing, swimming, hiking, arts and crafts, but the most rewarding aspect of the camp is the lasting friendships cultivated.

"It's a great place for girls to come



and let their hair down, experience nature and make lifelong friends," Barner remarks.

It's these aspects of camp that Barner hopes will appeal to young teens.

"It can be very difficult attracting teens to the camp because there are so many competing factors. They want to get jobs as soon as they're old enough to work and they don't want to go to camp," she explains. "But they should be having fun and camp is one of those places where you can create connections that last a long time."

As a long-time volunteer and mother of three daughters who participated in the camp, Marian Sczesny agrees.

"Camp was always a caring and meaningful place for me - a retreat from everyday life," she says. "The best memories are of all the people I met and served with over the years."

To help keep those memories alive, Sczesny decided to launch a unique project to celebrate the past 50 years - a memory book that documents the stories and photos from "people of all ages whose lives had been touched by their experiences at Camp Wohelo."

Sczesny is still seeking stories and photos to include in the memory book.

Other items needed for the event include silent auction items and donations to be used for special projects.

For more information about Camp Wohelo and its 50th anniversary event, visit their website at www.campwohelo.com, email campwohelo@yahoo.ca or call (780) 430-4062.

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SUPPLIED PHOTO

ENQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW: Members of Camp Wohelo hope to discover the identity of this mystery camper. The photo was taken in 1959.

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