

CAMP TAKAJO

On Long Lake
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TAK TALK

JUNE 2012

Dear Yeggs,

I had occasion to communicate with Nancy Zorensky recently. Nancy, for those of you who are too young to remember (which is most of you!) is the daughter of Morty Goldman who, with wife Elise, started Camp Takajo in 1947. Nancy reached out to me because her grandson and Morty and Elise's great-grandson, Jaden, will be starting as a Crow camper this summer. Under the pretext of asking some obscure question about visiting day, Nancy ultimately expressed her real concern as Jaden's grandmother that I keep a watchful eye on him as he makes the adjustment to being away from home for the very first time. My reaction was visceral because I share Nancy's feelings as I prepare to watch my two younger children go off to camp for the first time and because of my continued admiration for Morty, whose vision and principles guide me and Camp Takajo to this day.

Here is my response to Nancy which I could be writing to each and every parent—and grandparent—who has a young son or grandson going away to camp for the first time this summer.

Dear Nancy,

You know better than most what I go through this time of year. What is fascinating for me is that I truly think about Morty every single day as I prepare for the upcoming season. I still work from "the bible" and still use the same green card system with notes about each boy and his interests and background. No computer system can replace the sense one gets from speaking with a parent and meeting a child. Bunk placement comes from the gut, an intuition that can only be effective if you envision the child and his parents when laying out the green cards on a big table, forming each bunk carefully and thoughtfully, trying to make the best possible combination of boys so the chemistry in each and every bunk is just right.

Why do I think about Morty? Because I am living his life and continuing his dream, caring for "his baby."

I can probably tell you things about Morty that even you never knew. For example, while he always remained calm and under control, the pressure this time of year was all consuming. He worried



HE AIN'T HEAVY — ACTUALLY, YES HE IS!
"Next year YOU carry ME to camp!"
says Dylan Sharp to older brother, Kyle.

about whether he had the right mix of boys and the right counselor to handle a particular bunk. He anxiously awaited news of the projects going on at camp to make sure they would be completed in time for the season and that there would be no unexpected “hang-ups.” He never walked by a towering pine tree and saw only its beauty without spotting a dangling limb that needed to be pruned.

I know Morty’s heart was filled with a nervous excitement before each summer, I suspect similar to the way he must have felt during his first at bat playing varsity baseball for City College of New York back in the 30’s. Without a doubt, the most challenging part of preparing for camp was the emptiness he felt at leaving his family at home, heading to Maine alone to do what only he could do to be ready for opening day.

Preseason is always the hardest. Long days and tons of details. Your wife and children are still home finishing up the school year. I started my “countdown” weeks ago. At this time of year, I never take a hug or snuggle time with any of my children for granted. I bet Ben and Elaina (Jaden’s mom and dad) are experiencing the same feelings with Jaden right about now!

Why was Morty the greatest camp director ever? Because he never lost perspective on what mattered most. He worked hard to improve his program and facility every year. He always remained hands on and never wavered from his convictions—not easy to do for 42 consecutive summers. But Morty’s greatest qualities as a man were his love of his family and his love of his extended family, the campers and staff at Camp Takajo.

I promise you I will watch your Jaden like he is my own son and I will protect him with my life.

This is the pledge I make to Nancy Zorensky and the pledge I make to each and every parent—and grandparent—who entrusts their precious child to my care and to the care of all of us at Camp Takajo.

WHAT’S HAPPENING AT CAMP? Back by popular demand, we are excited to offer our specialty programs in soccer, baseball and basketball — and this year we’ll be adding a top notch program in lacrosse. Returning this summer are Jim Turtle, coach for UK Elite soccer; Brian Eagleson, former basketball coach at Archbishop Mitty High School in California; and two baseball coaches from the Uptown Athletic Program in NYC. Joining us this summer will be Jim Stagnitta who was the head lacrosse coach at Rutgers University for ten years and who is now the coach of the professional lacrosse team, the Denver Outlaws.

Once again campers of all ages and ability levels will have the opportunity to opt out of their regularly scheduled program and get intensive training during these high level mini-camps. This “specialty camp within our camp” allows boys to train in the sport or sports of their choice while enjoying the friendships and the traditional aspects of our well rounded program.

A mild winter helped our facility manager, Gerry Simpson, and his crew get a great head start on the million-and-one preparations that go into opening camp. A brand new fence surrounds our three signature clay tennis courts near the Takajo entrance arch. The gazebo next to the courts has been completely rebuilt. A brand new Gaga Court awaits campers of all ages who will enjoy this new, exciting game. Many of our buildings have fresh coats of paint, a number of bunks have new roofs, and a “few” bunk screens have been repaired after



PLEASE! THROW ME BACK IN!
Looks like fish fry for dinner
as Matt Konigsberg catches a whopper!

unknown projectiles *miraculously* flew through the air and occasionally broke a bunk screen or two. The fields are mowed, the docks are in the water, and all we need are the campers as we look forward to the Big Day on June 22 and the opening of Camp Takajo's 66th season.

While our facility is in the best shape ever, I often invoke Morty's phrase, "We are only as good as our staff." We are extremely fortunate to have the continuity in leadership that has been a hallmark of Camp Takajo since its inception. Our staffing director, Bob Lewis, in his twenty-fourth season, works tirelessly all winter to hire a top notch counselor staff. Bob now changes hats and becomes our waterfront director. During the preseason Bob oversees American Red Cross training programs in CPR, first aid, water safety, learn to swim and life guarding for all the members of our waterfront staff.

Group leaders Hank Fortin, Neil Minsky and Paddy Mohan have re-charged their batteries in the "off-season" and are ready for action. Hank returns for his forty-second season to oversee our youngest campers, the Warriors (boys finishing first, second, third and fourth grades). Hank's wife, Jane, returns to help with all the organizational details in Warrior Camp. Neil Minsky returns for his twenty-first summer as the head of Junior Camp (boys finishing grades five and six). Paddy Mohan returns for his twenty-seventh season. He is a perfect fit for our oldest campers, the Seniors (boys finishing grades seven, eight and nine).

Our pioneering program is in the capable hands of Colleen Eagleson who returns for her twentieth season. A high school teacher and swim coach during the year, Colleen will put her staff through an intensive pre-camp orientation in wilderness first aid, CPR and Maine Trip Leader certification. When the camp season begins, she will be responsible for organizing our in-camp hobby classes, overseeing our climbing wall and ropes course activities, and sending out over 100 day trips and overnights. In addition, Colleen will oversee the planning and execution of our Senior Big Trips which include weeklong expeditions to Acadia National Park, Mount Katahdin in Baxter State Park, and the Saint Croix River in northeastern Maine.

Hal Williams returns for his thirty-third summer to assist Colleen in our pioneering program and to take our oldest campers, the Seniors, out west to spend eight days camping and sightseeing in Utah and Nevada.

Nick Andreacci continues his responsibilities as our technology coordinator. Back for his twenty-first summer, Nick will coordinate the flow of information from our camp newspaper, photography and video programs and keep our website updated with photos and news from camp.

Returning for his twelfth summer to run our tennis program, Dan Aubuchon has worked with top ranked touring players and has trained tennis professionals for placement in clubs and resorts around the world through the renowned Peter Burwash International tennis management program.

Stalwarts Jeff Cunjak, Dave Wentz, Don Mathews, Jason Tackett, Krista Wynia and Ashleigh Todner are also back to bolster our administrative staff.



I'M MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY FACE!
Shad, the People's Choice, showing the musical acumen that complements his athletic and academic prowess.

WHO'S COMING BACK? Our counselors are the heart and soul of camp. Our administration is backed up by a strong veteran staff. Key returnees include: Claire Annikin-Smith, Glenn Billups, David Bucknell, Trent Bynum, Vlad Catlan, Joe Connors, Meghan Eagleson, Anthony Ebstein, Logan Fletcher, Trent Fyffe, Tim Galvin, Jon Gilden, Brett Gober, Tom Hancox, Mary Beth Heine, John Howell, Brian Huffman, Josh Hunt, J.J. Jeffries, Charlotte Kagan, Austin King, Mike Lear, Rob Letendre, Harrison Manchel, Ryan McNair, Kolby McNeal, Sam McSweeney, Richard Muszynski, Brandon Nantwi, Shad Osayomi, Dave Pilgreen, Max Prout, Jonathan Rivera, Jon Roberts, Carlos Salazar, Mike Sanderson, Joey Schell, Benjie Shanus, James Sheppard, Gautam Sreeram, Lacy Tell, Stacy Tell, Paul Vinzani, Eddie Weiner, Lauren Wiley, Joe Wood and Dusan Zivkovic.

We are excited to welcome back Josh Hunt, Hannah Rankin and Al Ades who return after a brief hiatus. And we are thrilled to welcome some outstanding former campers who are starting their counselor careers—Jake Ades, Jason Flashner, Jordan Nick, Alex Nick, Blake Schmidt, Andrew Laboz and Ben Konigsberg.

Warren is excited to have three terrific returnees in the office—Taylor King, Brooke Alini and Lauren Rosenfeld —secretaries to the stars who tend to our every need and serve as liaison to our camp parents. Our culinary staff will again be anchored by our indefatigable steward Donnie Abrams and head chef Tom Lam who will be joined by veteran Alex Lins. Our medical staff will be in good hands under the capable leadership of office manager Jill Hockney and returning nurses Chic Graham, Kristeena Buselli and Alisa Winkie. Attending to our medical needs will be former camper and camp dad Dr. Rick Warner (Grant and Seth), camp grandfather Dr. Bob Belin (Alex and Jordan Nick), camp dad Dr. Lee Pressler (Michael), and former camper and camp dad Dr. Richard Garber (Sam).

Seven Year Campers....we have *twenty-two* seven-year campers this summer! The following will be recognized for this special achievement: William Besen, Sam Dern, Jonny Dorf, Miguel Gonzalez, Ricardo Gonzalez, Max Hartman, Josh Konigsberg, Bennett Kramer, Chase Levi, David Levy, Zach Marcus, Liam Mohan, Eric Plaut, Jordan Popofsky, Ben Reitman, Spencer Singer, Harrison Slobodien, Ryan Sobel, Ross Solomon, Jacob Solomons, Adam Spector and Herbert Swaab.

Eight Year Campers....We have *nineteen* eight year-campers! Members of this illustrious group are Matt Berger, Billy Berns, David Cummins, Evan Gaines, Alex Gibstein, Griffin Goldberg, David Goldman, Michael Hershenhorn, Charles Hochfelder, Teddy Kahn, Ben Manchel, Jake Millman, Zack Shandell, Andrew Sherbun, Zach Shulman, Sam Tanenbaum, Rory Tell, Jared Welsch and Korey Welsch.

Nine Year Camper....Sammy Tabin will receive the coveted nine-year toilet seat!

Welcome Back! We are excited to welcome back after a year's absence Teddy Kahn, Jonny Dorf and Harrison Lerner.

Little Brothers joining the Takajo fraternity this summer are Daniel Drucker (Matt), Oscar Mindich (Max), George Harris (Henry), Max Klitschko (Yegor), Justin Horlick (Ryan), Todd Shriber (Evan), Ben Hoexter (Zach), Carson Cohen (Cooper), Tyler Greenberg (Max), Jonah Ross (Eli) and Lucas Simon (Trevor and Garrett)

Like Father, Like Son! Following in dad's footsteps this summer are Josh Snyder (dad, Barry), Ryan Gerson (Jeff), Zach Lubar (Greg), Josh Underberg (James), Jason Gans (Jeremy), James Sassower (Ed—and brother William), Jacob Goldklang (Jeff—and brother Jared), Harry Goldenstein (Gary—and brother Sammy), Harrison Schneider (Henry), Henry Mondschein (Josh), William Fabrikant (Andy), Jake Sher (grandfather Richie), Jack Konigsberg (brother Max, dad Jeff, and grandfather Donny!), and Jaden Zorensky (dad Ben—and great-grandfather Morty Goldman!).

Our Oldest Camper this summer is Sam Stevens who turns sixteen just before camp starts.

Our Youngest Camper is Zachary Braverman who will be 6 years, 9 months at camptime.

OVERHEARD AT CAMP LAST SUMMER

Senior camper Nick Hershey: “You’ve been with me through all the bad times.
When I twisted my ankle playing basketball, you were there.
When I fell out of bed and hit my head, you were there.
When I woke up sick and had to go to the medical center,
you were there. You know what?”

Senior counselor Ryan McNair: “What?”

Nick: “I’m beginning to think you’re bad luck.”

Office manager Taylor King: “Name two states in the United State.”

Secretary Brooke Alini: “Okay. I’ll name one Taylor and the other Brooke.”

Junior counselor Tim Galvin: “George Washington chopped down the cherry tree,
but then he admitted it. Do you know why his father didn’t punish him?”

Junior camper Riley Friedman: “Because he still had the axe in his hand?”

Senior camper Jack Sibel: “Why are you returning that book?”

Senior counselor Max Prout: “Because it’s a medical book and something is missing.”

Jack: “What’s missing?”

Max: “The appendix.”

Warrior counselor Kolby McNeal: “When is your birthday.”

Junior camper Austin Wolk: “July fifteenth.”

Kolby: “What year?”

Austin: “Every year.”



REALLY? YOU'RE GOING TO CAMP TAKAJO THIS SUMMER?
Kobe Bryant asks Jake Sher who follows in grandfather, Richie Sher's,
footsteps—except Jake is smarter, better looking and plans to follow the rules.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW???

When Jeff asked me a couple of months ago to write the *Where Are They Now?* section of the Tak Talk, my first reaction was “Where do I start?!” I first met Jeff as an 8-year old prospective camper when he made a visit to my parents’ home in Owings Mills, Maryland in 1989. My best friend, Ryan Fisher, and his older brother Chad were already campers at Takajo, so Jeff’s visit was merely a formality at that point, but my parents had to check the box nonetheless. Little did I know as an 8-year old boy that Jeff’s visit, and the decision to attend Takajo, would be the beginning of a series of life experiences that would define who I am today.

Camp Takajo first served as a place of happy refuge for me during my younger years, providing me with a number of lessons both on and off the fields including sportsmanship, integrity, loyalty and courage. Then as a young adult Takajo proved to be a wonderful place to visit, constantly bringing back memories of companionship and youthful revelry. And now, as a grown man, it not only serves as a periodic escape from reality, but it will soon be the setting where I will marry my beautiful wife-to-be, Lindsay Krauss, Jeff’s stepdaughter. Jeff is someone who has worn a number of different hats in my life. He started as Camp Director, morphed into mentor and role model, became a tremendous friend and confidant, and I can proudly say that at the end of the summer I will be able to call him “Dad.”

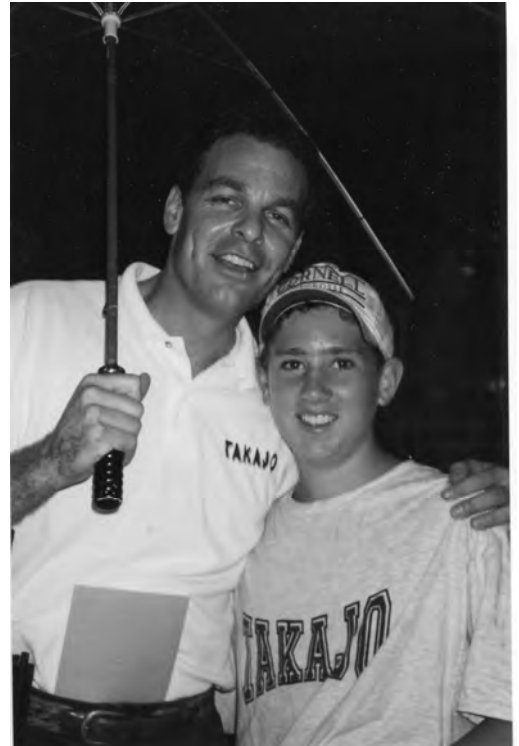
I can still remember that small twinge of anxiety the first time I rode the camp bus down Takajo Road and through the Arch. My apprehension quickly turned to excitement as I made my way to my first bunk, Chappaqua, and quickly inserted myself into a game of flag football that had broken out on the Warrior quad. To this day I’ll never forget the diving catch that Gregg Novak made in that game as it rivals any NFL highlight I’ve ever seen.

The next six summers were the best of my life... filled with everlasting memories, incredible friendships and life-lessons that still hold firm today. As a Warrior, I’ll always remember the day I finally became a member of Don Matthews’ never-ending list of first-time water skiers; or learning all of the words to “Sometimes I Rhyme Slow, Sometimes I Rhyme Quick” during rest hour with Alex Lugo and Spencer Lewin. To this day, whenever I go swimming, I tell everyone to employ the “Bob Lewis Buddy System” and I’m 30 years old! I’ll never forget that first summer - I wore a Greg Olsen Orioles t-shirt for eight straight days until it got ripped off of me while on a mini-trip to the natural water slides. And of course, I remember my introduction to the Indian Council Fires and learning for the first time about tolerance, courage, obedience, and of course, magnanimity!

As a Junior, I remember the marathon tennis matches and round robins between myself, Alex Grodd and Andy Kolker (they always beat me). ...Bunk Chippewa hiking up Mount Washington with Phil Harris (but taking the shuttle van back down because we were all so tired). ...My father coming up for father-son weekend with Arthur Grodd (Alex’s father) and Matt “Sweets” Grodd (Alex’s younger brother, who went on to become a camper) and taking all of the counselors out to Rick’s until the owner kicked us out because Alex, Matt and I were too young to stay past a certain time. During those years, I got to an age where I started to appreciate Warren’s playing of Tattoo and Taps on a nightly basis, allowing myself to reflect on the days and weeks that had passed since we arrived at camp and how much I was going to miss it all when I had to go back home to the real world of middle school.

My Intermediate and Sub-Senior years at Takajo were spent on the lacrosse field and the tennis courts. I still remember head tennis counselor Tom Walker allowing us to play under the lights after all of the other campers had gone to sleep in order to get us ready for a big intercamp the next day. ...Brian Winslow taking me to his parents’ ice cream shop for my birthday and coming back with pizza and coke for all the guys in Algonquin that night. ...Paddy Mohan leading Senior line-ups, allowing me to be in charge of the walkie-talkie and joking around with the nurses in the infirmary. ...Participating in my one and only Big Show, playing the part of Sohovik in *Damn Yankees*. ...And I’ll never forget our last night of camp, when a group of us (Casey Yurow, Alex Grodd, Daniel Klein, Mike Steinberg, Ryan Fisher, Brett Nidel, Alex O’Flynn, and many others) braved a thunderstorm and spent the night in centerfield of the Senior baseball field, watching the sun come up, telling stories of summers past.

The summers spent at Takajo as a camper proved to be the best stepping stone I could have asked for into adulthood. The independence and confidence gained from being away from home for those eight weeks at such a young age gave me the poise and self-reliance I still find useful today. I also forged many close relationships during those years, and two of my best friends in the world are ex-campers. Ryan Fisher, who will be the best man in my wedding in August, and Daniel Klein, one of my groomsmen, have been tremendous ‘brothers’ to me since our years together up in Maine. Some of the memories and experiences we’ve shared are second to none, and I can’t wait to try and relive at least a few of them at Lindsay’s and my wedding in August.



WHO’S YOUR DADDY?
Little did Evan or I realize in our wildest dreams—or nightmares—that our future together was just beginning.

Even though my summers as a camper came to an end early in high school, my experiences at Takajo continued to help guide me through my adolescent years. I first picked up a lacrosse stick as a Junior Green in the summer of 1992, and thankfully my playing days didn't end when I left Naples. Because of my affinity for the sport as a camper, I made the switch from tennis to lacrosse as an eighth-grader and I never looked back. My high school team won a national championship during my senior year, and I parlayed my defensive skills into a spot and a co-captaincy on the varsity lacrosse team at the University of Pennsylvania.

The summer between sophomore and junior years at UPENN, Ryan Fisher and I decided to leave home and drive cross country for 5 weeks. After picking up Ryan's brother, Chad, in Toronto and after a quick pit-stop in Montreal, we decided to make a day trip to Takajo on our way to meet Daniel Klein in Boston. The three of us hadn't been back to camp in a handful of years, and as soon as we made our way down the Takajo Road, past the Tak-a-Hole, all of our wonderful memories of camp came flooding back. Needless to say, our "day-trip" turned into a two-day / two-night stay on the shores of Long Lake. We played basketball, baseball, tried to water ski (with Liam McHugh and Dave Wentz), ate Norm's famous camp fare, snuck in a pizza for some young campers from Baltimore, and even spent a night on OD with Neil Minsky.

During our brief stay at camp that summer, Jeff approached me and let me know that his step-daughter, Lindsay, whom I had never met, would be an incoming freshman at the University of Pennsylvania. He also very slyly asked if I could round up "some of my lacrosse buddies" to help move her in to her freshman dorm in the beginning of September. In a moment of weakness (and as a ploy to sneak my way into the freshman quad), I agreed to help out and told Jeff to give me a call on his way to Philadelphia.

The morning of move-in day, I found myself standing outside of the quad watching Lindsay's caravan of SUVs pull up to 36th and Spruce to drop off all of her prized possessions. As I was planning my getaway from the impending hard labor—I mean securing a few bins to help speed along the move-in process—my mindset quickly changed once I saw Lindsay emerge from one of the SUVs as it pulled up to the curb. That day was the beginning of a lengthy 11-year, somewhat complicated courtship.

I can now report that earlier this year Lindsay and I got engaged, and I'm the happiest Takajo alum there is. As we were deciding when and where we wanted to get married, every conversation we had brought us back to Takajo and we made the decision that Long Lake would be the spot. What better setting to start the beginning of our life together than at the place that ultimately converged our two paths into one.

Over the years, I've had the opportunity to spend a fair amount of time at camp with Lindsay, Jeff, Joan, Donny, Janey and their wonderful family. I continue to marvel at the greatness that Jeff has created, following in Morty Goldman's footsteps. Getting to watch (and live vicariously through) Max and, soon, Jack's (Jeff's sons and my soon-to-be little brothers) experiences as campers really does bring all of the memories flooding back. Last summer, as Lindsay and I were up for a long weekend, we were able to see the Senior Big Show. Listening to Jeff speak at the end, and then participating as Hank lead the camp song and Warren played Tattoo, made me feel like I had never left. If you haven't been up to visit in a while, I would highly recommend making the trip. Certain buildings have changed over the years, and there have been a number of upgrades to the facilities, but the feeling I get as I walk through the Arch, each and every time, is still one filled with anxiousness, excitement and serenity all mixed together.

As I enter my fourth decade of life and embark on the adventure of matrimony in a few months, I count myself so lucky for a variety of different reasons. Takajo always was and will continue to be a constant presence in my life. In the past it served as an oasis away from home, providing endless memories and everlasting friendships. But most importantly, it led me to my future wife and the love of my life. At the end of August, as we are walking down the aisle, Lindsay and I will be making a new Takajo memory to add to the list. Luckily, my Takajo experience continues to grow on a daily basis, and I hope to maintain the ideals that camp has taught me for the rest of my life.

Thank you to Jeff and Warren for allowing me to write this article. I hope to hear from anyone that I may have lost touch with over the years. You can reach me at evanweinberg@gmail.com.



SWEETIE, IT'S 8 DEGREES BELOW ZERO, BUT IF YOU WANT TO STAY AND TAKE MORE PICTURES, THAT'S OKAY WITH ME.
Evan Weinberg was always a quick learner as he stands by his soon-to-be better half, Lindsay Krauss, as the sun sets behind Long Lake on a clear winter day at camp.

— Evan Weinberg

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SPECIAL NOTES

Camp Takajo is known for its traditional values, a term that sometimes feels obsolete. Can we still have traditional values when the world embraces email, texting, tweeting, Facebook and a pervasive social media culture? Will our society continue to insist that our children learn the simple art of eye contact, conversation and common courtesy? Will the simplicity that technology promotes supersede what was once “human nature?”

Ours is a tradition in transition. As director, I see my role as keeping one foot firmly planted in the past to remain true to Takajo’s traditional values, while at the same time taking a step forward into the future and embracing the world in which we live. Rather than reject this era of technological advancement, I see it as an exciting opportunity to spread our message and to share our community with a larger audience than ever before. It also allows us to reconnect with so many who have gone before who cherish the values and traditions they learned during their summers at Camp Takajo.

When I think back to the Tak Talk newsletters written by Takajo’s founder, Morty Goldman, I remember how he always included a values oriented message. Camp was a classroom, a conduit to teach meaningful life lessons to some of today’s greatest leaders, teachers and parents. Change is inevitable and we must teach our children to adapt to the world in which we live in without losing a sense of the core values and principles that provide us with a solid foundation.

While technology is in many ways antithetical to camping, ironically Facebook and other forms of social media have enabled countless Takajo alums to reconnect with old friends from camp. As we prepare for our 66th season, we continue to reach out to our extended Takajo family to re-establish ties with those who have shared in this special experience.

Please take a moment and go to our website, www.camptakajo.com, and click on the Alumni tab. Login to your existing account or create a new one to get in touch with your old camp friends, view photos of Takajo days gone by, stay current with what’s happening at camp, and receive the Tak Talk newsletter.

As we embark on our 66th season, here is a quote from Abraham Lincoln which will serve us well as we look to make the most of this amazing opportunity before us:

“Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other.”

Our pioneering and waterfront staffs are gearing up for their rigorous preseason training. Our maintenance crew is hard at work putting the finishing touches on all the facilities. Everything is primed and ready to go!

Can’t wait to see everyone on June 22!

As ever,

