

TRADITIONS

The Woodstock Spirit is not definable but undeniable to campers and staff from all decades who have sung the songs, chanted the cheers, and made lifelong friends in a place where just being yourself is more than enough to make you special. "I've got that Woodstock Spirit done in my heart....."

Chief Acquittimaug, whose opening campfire visits began in the earliest days of the camp, honors an historical Nipmuck Indian who lived in what is now the center of the town of Woodstock. As a boy, he accompanied his father and other Nipmucks on a mission to carry corn to sell to the starving colonists of Boston. Acquittimaug lived well over one hundred years as was well known to the first settlers in Woodstock. The "feather story" of how he became chief is not historical, but accurately portrays the camp's emphasis on friendship and respect for every boy and girl at camp.

Oscar the giant snapping turtle has been sighted in Black Pond for at least 50 years. **Carey Greene**, waterfront director in the 1960's, vividly remembers director Fred Wirth frantically calling all swimmers to shore whenever his monstrous shell was seen trolling too close. Oscar has never bitten anyone and it is not known whether he is one or many.

The Skipper's Post, an old sales office for a housing development, was brought to Camp Woodstock on a trailer in 1925 by **Ward Kesselbrock** when he was 16 years old. It was placed "temporarily" on a large rock next to the lake. After surviving the 1938 hurricane with no damage it was decided to leave it there. The building has housed waterfront directors for over 85 years.

The Camp Hymn has been sung by Woodstockers since the 1930's."Camping in the Pines of Woodstock down by the lake, Lifetime memories in the making down by the lake, Over woodland trails we wandered down by the lake, Of Camp Woodstock we'll always ponder, down by the lake....."

Pop's Lodge, known to many as the Program Lodge is now named in honor of "Pop", **Elmer Theines**, our first director. His insistence to not close the camp after the 1938 hurricane when it was all but destroyed has benefited thousand of campers. An excerpt from his dedication speech for the building in 1939 eloquently states his reason. Read it above the fireplace the next time you're in his lodge.

Crazy Annie lived in a small cabin near the shore across the lake in the 1950's. She could be seen often on her porch in a rocking chair, but no one seemed to know who she was or what she was doing there. Annie was feared by the campers who were told by waterfront director **Bill Marshman** not to paddle too close to her. The foundations of her cabin can still be found near the shore across from the Boathouse.

Woodstock Charlie, our favorite ghost, is a legend of unknown origin. Over the years the story morphed into its present form to stress the importance of not excluding those among us who are different from us. As told today, Charley's ghost does not depart the camp until the love of two brave counselors set him free. Unlike Oscar, there are no known sightings of Charlie whose tall skeletal structure and lengthy fingernails could not have been missed.

"Gray Squirrel, Gray Squirrel, swish your busy tail". Woodstockers from the eighties may never forget the visage of director **John Bennett** attempting to sing and choreograph this unmelodious song to uncooperative Pequots and Commanches.

The Order of the Oar seems to have come to Camp Woodstock in 1988 with program director **Mike Kerek, (Bundy)**, who was himself subjected to being tossed into the air on his birthday and smacked some 20 times, one for each year of his life.

C.H.A.O.S. Woodstock's most popular evening program since its debut in 1987 features costumed "aliens" being pursued by black-clad campers. Any Woodstocker who has not been surprised by Doctor Hatchet in the dark recesses of the barn or seen a fleeting glimpse of the Reaper escaping into the murky swamp has not fully experienced Camp Woodstock.

CHoRR, the current culture of camp Woodstock was introduced in 1997 by assistant director **Steve Heiny** and enthusiastically endorsed by program director **Ericka Boiczuk**, now Fangiullo. This emphasis on caring, honesty, respect and responsibility is openly spoken and lived at camp. These CHoRR values are helping produce strong young leaders well beyond the pines of Woodstock.