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# Canada Camps

The magazine for Canadian camp professionals

## Accepting the challenge

Before campers begin using any type of challenge course, camps must first examine and manage all of the risks involved

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## Getting Her Camp Fix

You can take the camp director out of the camp, but you can't take the camp out of the camp director.

At some point in life, everyone will wake up one morning, look in the mirror and ask themselves: Am I ready to retire? It is an inevitable question and one I had to ask myself before transitioning from a career in camping to a life of retirement.

At age 45 I had just completed my fourth stint as a camp director — two at not-for-profit agency camps, one at a private camp and one operated by the Ontario government, which spanned approximately 25 years and covered three provinces: New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario. It was only when I decided to retire from camping that uncertainty filled my being as I was unsure what my future would hold. This is the story of my journey.

For 19 years, like so many other valued and dedicate volunteers, I volunteered for committees and sat on the board of directors of the Ontario Camping Association, CCA/ACC and the Ontario Camp Directors Workshop.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, while studying for my Masters of Education at the University of Toronto, I worked on a business plan that focused on my personal dream of one day owning and operating a facility with programming for teens and older adults. At the time, I felt destined to owning my own camp and in my attempt to make this a reality, I spent the next 15 years looking at more than 400 properties throughout Quebec and Ontario.

By August 1995 I still had not found my "dream" property, but with a little help from my friends Rob Heming, Dorothy Walter and Jan Clarke, I began to internalize the change and transition that was about to take place.

In November 1995, Jan and I purchased an incredible piece of property sitting next to a falls near Minden, Ont. — in the heart of the Haliburton Highlands. The house on the property, affectionately

known as "The Lodge," was once owned by Rob and his family, and boasted an incredible Finnish history dating back to 1928. The "Lodge" and its property were formerly known as the Sunny Rock Lodge. Was the "Lodge" going to be the camp I was destined to own? Or was my passion of a new career just being conceived?

Well, it turned out to be the latter for following six months of renovation, Jan and I opened the Sunny Rock Bed & Breakfast. This marked my official retirement from camping, although to this day, my heart still pines for the sound of a busy (and noisy) summer dining hall and all of the difficult daily decisions that goes with being a camp director. I have since, each summer,



visited my friend's camps to acquire "my camp fix."

Ultimately though, it is my time spent at camp that has enabled me to be a successful owner of a bed and breakfast establishment. All of the skills I feel I have mastered from my hands on experience, through my interaction with colleagues and my attendance at conferences and workshops are valued tools that I continue to use every day.

And although my clientele has changed, the marketing, registration, accounting, facility maintenance, housekeeping, staffing, long-range planning, customer service, problem solving and risk management skills I learned from camp remain vital tools in my job of operating Sunny Rock.

These days, instead of early morning staff meetings, for listing and delegating jobs, I sit on my own deck with a coffee in hand and the sound of falls in the background, preparing the list of jobs to do

every day. I then spend the day making my way through that list.

Although I strive to be busy accommodating and feeding guests their deliciously tempting breakfasts, there are welcome down times as well. And similar to my life at camp, the busiest season for me still remains from the May long weekend to Thanksgiving — I guess I am not yet destined to know what a summer holiday feels



Together with Jan Clarke, Sally Moore (right) owns and operates Sunny Rock Bed & Breakfast (left), which despite keeping her busy allows her to remain involved in her first love: the camp industry.

like. Despite all of this, there are still plenty of opportunities for me to continue my involvement with my camping friends and colleagues and my contribution to the camp industry. As a fellow of the Society of Camp Directors there are two dinner meetings each year that I attend, and then there is the annual OCA Director's Conference that I look forward to visiting each and every year. (At this year's conference, I was delighted and honoured to be presented with a Honorary Life Membership from the OCA.) And if that isn't enough to get my camp blood flowing, I attend the International Camping Congress every three years.

I am forever reminded by my quiet thoughts that I could never have accomplished what I have with Sunny Rock and enjoy this lakeside luxury living had I not worked my way through the trials and tribulations of my camping career. I have only moved on and retired from the hard work of camp yet I have not really retired at all. There is life after camp and it can be darn busy and offer lots of hard and rewarding work.

Sally Moore owns Sunny Rock Bed & Breakfast ([www.sunnyrock.on.ca](http://www.sunnyrock.on.ca)), located in Ontario's Haliburton Highlands. ☐