

## **A LETTER FROM A DEVOTED STAFF MEMBER... WRITTEN AFTER THE SUMMER OF 2007...**

“Bring home your memories, bring home your stuff”

Hello, my name is Max Halparin and I am an Alumni Walden Staff member. In my interview with Sol last year, we spent a lot of time speaking about the environment and discussing some of the first steps that everyone at Walden can take to make camp more ‘green’. The natural beauty of the camp setting is undeniable, and so too should camp’s contribution to the environment.

Without a doubt, the summer of 2007 was an amazing one. From camp-wide programs to cabin friendships, things really ‘clicked’ at camp. On the last day of the summer, after the trucks had cleared the mountains of duffel bags from all the units, Walden’s campers and staff said their goodbyes for another year.

Despite our efforts last summer, I was struck by how much “stuff” was still left behind at the end of the summer! There was a lot of high quality materials like pillows, food, air mattresses and extra shelving and other things that may have been hidden by campers at camp.

My experiences throughout my summers in the Comic unit have taught me that kids with too much stuff can become frustrated when their belongings are too easily disorganized. Packing less helps the daily cabin cleanup go by more smoothly giving campers and staff a feeling of comfort. Also, and especially for the younger kids (but true also for older kids and staff!), I have learned that managing and protecting valuables at camp can provide a source of stress for campers.

Camp supplies tons of food – sometimes it feels like we’re eating all the time! Over the years, camp’s food has become more tasty and nutritious, and I’ve noticed that I tend to bring up less and less food of my own. At first, I didn’t try to abide by the “one shopping bag of food” rule, but now, anything more than that (and even that much!) isn’t necessary, and probably won’t be eaten.

I certainly haven’t had the responsibility of packing for one, two, or even three children going to camp for the summer, and I can only imagine that it must be an arduous task for parents. In the spirit of making camp greener though, I can only suggest that we keep ourselves to the quantities on the packing list. Also, I know that camp is trying to limit the amount of packaging it uses, so it is best if we all try to limit the amount of stuff that will go into the garbage once campers come up to camp.

So, from one person who loves camp to another: please only pack what’s on the list!

Here are a few things we can do to reduce camp’s garbage:

- 1) Pack lightly (and plan to take your belongings home)
- 2) Bring just 1 shopping bag of food
- 3) Avoid the electronics, try battery-free flashlights!
- 4) Recognize the most important one of the “3 R’s” – reduce
- 5) Simply don’t send any plastic furniture including shelves of any kind

I want to once again wish you all an amazing summer,

Max

*Max Halperin spent 6 years at Walden. Max began his career at Walden as a camper later becoming one of camp’s finest male counselors. We were so excited by the commitment Max expressed for both camp and the environment in his interview in 2007 that when Max shared with me his interest in writing a letter to our families about “responsible packing”, I invited him to do so. In that same summer, Max helped us introduce recycling to campers at Walden and set the stage for many more environmental initiatives to come. On behalf of all of us at camp, I want to thank you for taking the time to read Max’s letter, Sol*