

A LITTLE QUICK HISTORY OF

CAMP HE HO HA

By Ken Thomas

A speech given at a square dancing fund raiser for Camp HE HO HA

FIRST WHO CAN TELL ME WHAT HE HO HA STANDS FOR?

HEALTH HOPE and HAPPINESS

When I was 8 years old I lived in Lethbridge with my parents. My dad was a member of the Kiwanis club. The club heard about a new camp opening up for this disabled way up north of Edmonton called Camp Lake Isle (now called Camp HE HO HA)

THE KIWANIS CLUB WANTED TO SEND A CHILD OR 4 TO THIS NEW CAMP. OF COURSE I WAS CHOSEN.

I and several other children from Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton were driven to this new camp in a big wheelchair bus that had a fold down drawbridge type back door ramp.

The camp at that time had very little compared to what is there now.

There was a few tiny cabins a small rec hall and a dining room kitchen, We swam in the lake for the first four/five years, all they had was a motor boat and a hay wagon pulled by a tractor

I still remember my first camp counselor. Because several years later he was my Grade six teacher, then about 25 years after that he and his wife came to dance several times with our wheelchair dancing group the Swinging Spokes. (Who I danced with for 38 years until we folded in 2014. I now dance with the Double Diamond Dance club.) Many of you square dancers know him. Ron and Elaine Fishburne

For about twenty years I went too this fun camp every summer and for about five six years to winter camp between Christmas and new years where we use to be pulled on especially designed sleds our wheelchairs were tied on to and were pulled by snowmobiles across the frozen lake as fast as the machine would go.

We did a lot of things back then that would not be allowed but we had fun! I am sure the campers still have fun today.

I had to quit going to camp when I started competing internationally in the sport of track, which I did for the next fourteen years every summer. I still compete in local 10K and half Marathon races.

I never went back to Camp He Ho ha as a camper since 1979. although I have been there to visit to see how the camp has changed over the decades. But seeing how the camp will be 60 years old next year (2020) I might consider applying to go to the senior camp! Or maybe we can have a square dancing weekend out there as they use to have in the 70's/80's.