

September 11 in Gander -
1952!!

For anyone not having spent the 21th century in a jungle without contact with the outside world, the date September 11 brings up images of horror and carnage, a veritable witness to the power of ignorance.

That was 2001 - things were different in Gander 11 September 1952.

The story below is about happier times in Gander, more precisely on the shores of Gander Lake. It is from the "Skyliner", volume 15, no 37 of the Trans World Airline Employee publication of 11 September 1952, with the events happening during the previous summer. It was written by James Brownell of the TWA dispatch office.

If you are one of lucky people to have lived on the "Old Airport", see how many names you can recognize!

Annual TWA Gander Lake Picnic Produces Sizzling Hot Steaks, Boating and Dunking

By James Brownell

GANDER—TWAers began gathering about mid-day on the shores of beautiful Lake Gander for what is rapidly becoming the "annual TWA steak fry."

Arriving by various means were Mr. and Mrs. Jack Kotesich, John Murphy, Jerry Wakeham, Bill Mendina, Don Geist, Paul Husak, Ed Walden, Ruth Miller, Dwight Fulton, Gene Austin, Mrs. Bob Thornby and yours truly. Numerous children,

17 of whom belong to dispatch personnel, made for a record TWA Gander crowd.

The spot selected for the steak fry was Rocky beach, a secluded beach a mile or more down the lake from the main dock area. Power boats, owned by Jack Kostesich, Don Geist and Bill Mendina, and my canoe furnished the necessary transportation to the picnic site. The boys with the motorboats ran a shuttle service in order to accommodate all the people. The canoe, manned by Ed Walden and myself, carried the supplies.

Once the steaks had been grilled and everyone eaten his fill, the evening's entertainment turned to boating exhibitions. Some of the older children canoed along the shore of the lake.

Two main aquatic events were the feature of the evening. One was a speed exhibition put on by Bill Mendina in his boat. Bill rode the porpoising craft standing up in the bow, with a half-inch hawser attached to the motor serving as reins—the remaining few feet of the rope being used as a whip to crack over the prow of the charging steed to the hoarse cry of, "Mule train—Hi yaaaa!"

When sanity once again settled over the crowd, Jack Kostesich (not without plenty of encouragement) decided to try his skill at aqua-planing behind Don Geist's boat. The sun was sinking behind the hills on the far side of the lake the air was becoming cooler and several people were reaching for their jackets. Jack, not relishing the thought of getting into the chilly water, had the idea he could ride the aqua-plane without getting wet, although he was dressed for any eventuality.

A take off, or "pull off" from shore, was attempted, but needless to say, Jack was thoroughly wet by the time they had gone 20 feet. However, after a few attempts he managed to stand up on the accelerating board. After three or four dashes past the beach and nearly as many spills, Jack became quite proficient on the hurtling timber. He did learn, though, when falling to let go of the line and keep his mouth closed—but he learned it the hard way, lowering the water level of the lake noticeably by the amount of it he swallowed.

Back on shore and warmed by a roaring fire, the lake once again quiet after the noisy buzzing and churning of the outboards and the children settled quietly on the blankets, the inevitable song fest started. This was led for the most part by the many Newfoundlanders present, with their ballads of this north country. The long summer twilight, the dying embers of the once big fire and the quiet lapping of gentle waves on the rocky shore

made the inevitable packing up to start home a sad chore.

The canoers loaded their craft to the gunwales with cargo and started the procession to the landing area. The power boats packed with picnickers churned past the canoe, resuming their shuttle service back to the awaiting cars for the last leg of the trip home.

It was indeed a high spot in the summer activities of the Gander TWAers and all vowed that they would not wait until next summer for a similar outing in this land of outdoor activities.
