

## Reflections of Rendezvous '98

by Toni Nemanick

Rendezvous weekend took so many memories out of storage and brought them to life around campfire songs and stories. In the weeks since acquaintances were renewed and friendships rekindled, the fun and the camaraderie have lingered. So, I'm finally answering that persistent inner voice that reminds me to say "thank you" to everyone who made it so easy for me to just show up and be welcomed, fed, and entertained. (And to Dave Greenlee who mentions so many of you by name on the website. And especially to Dave Hyink, for his persistent voice telling me, "write your reflections.") Thank you.

It's been well over 30 years since I first paddled up to and beyond Prairie Portage. When I think of the sheer numbers of us who were lucky enough to hear, and had the sense to answer, the call of the Far Northland, I am amazed and humbled. We have felt the bonds that were formed in shared experiences; we have seen the signs of commitment to caring for the wilderness. I was never so appreciative of being in such good company, though, as when I attended the Annual Meeting of the Sommers Alumni Association.

Who would've thought that any such meeting would be touching, inspiring, fun, funny, educational, satisfying - and last just over an hour? When I sent in my membership dues, I already knew that the SAA was up to lots of good. The website told me who was doing what at and for the Base. But words and photos transmitted electronically didn't prepare me for what I learned in person at the Annual Meeting. The accounts of scholarships awarded, Bay Post credits given, and paddles, books and packs purchased clearly demonstrated what it means to "walk the talk." Never have I been so sure that the money I send to an organization is so well spent.

Are any of us surprised at the lessons still being learned from headwinds, thunderstorms, muddy trails, starry nights, sunburn days, beaver streams and hidden campsites? The SAA provides an avenue for finding ways to create and nurture these lessons, to pass on to others what was passed on to us by Cliff Hanson, Dorothy Harry, Dorothy Molter, Benny Ambrose, Sandy Bridges, and .....