



NORTHERN TIER NATIONAL HIGH ADVENTURE

REFLECTIONS

— CHARLES L. SOMMERS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INC. —



New Dining Hall and Conference Center

by Mike Holdgrafer

If everything continues on track as planned, construction on a new Dining Hall and Conference Center will commence this Spring for use by May 2011. The tentative location will be on the site of the current Rendezvous area. When completed, the new 2-story Dining Hall and Conference Center will be able to serve up to 250 people in one meal setting, eliminating constraints associated with feeding large groups in the current Dining Hall. In addition, the facility will house the Trading Post and related storage, a concession area and

three smaller conference rooms. Upon arrival at the Base, it is anticipated that all crew check-in will take place in the new facility.

Preliminary planning for the Dining Hall began with **Doug Hirdler** during his last year as General Manager. Picking up the reins, **Kevin Dowling**, General Manager, has been hard at work raising capital and leading the design phase of the project with local architects from Virginia, Minnesota. **Ray Wood**, Northern Tier Committee Chairman, has also been instrumental in leading the capital funding for this project, supported by **Dave Hyink**. On the planning side, **Brian Glass**, an architect from BSA National, has provided tremendous support, assisted by **Don Melander**, who has been sharing his years of experience as an architect from Duluth and providing guidance as to the project, including a re-design of the parking facilities and entrance.

Although part of this project will be funded through accumulated depreciation from over the years, part of the cost is borne by individuals willing to step forward and

promote the completion of this project. Leading this effort has been **Pat Cox**, SAA Director and the current President. Pat pledged \$550,000 to the completion of the Dining Hall and Conference Center subject to donations matching his pledge on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The scope of Pat's generosity is simply overwhelming and richly deserving of our gratitude. Absent his support, the dream of a new facility would still remain a dream. Thank you Pat!

Information about how SAA members may help contribute to this project will be published in the near future.

For many SAA members, the current Dining Hall is a facility rich with stories. Unfortunately, originally designed for summer use and modified over time for year-round use, Northern Tier's needs warrant a new structure. Upon completion of the new building, the existing structure will be razed and the building's footprint will be integrated into a new Master Plan for the entire Base.

More news will be forthcoming as planning moves forward for the new Dining Hall and Conference Center. ■

Alumni Trip Opportunities

An exclusive opportunity for members of the *Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association*, the *Philmont Staff Association* and *Florida Sea Base Alumni and Friends Association*.

Alumni Wilderness Voyage

August 28 –
September 4, 2010

A 7-Day Canoe Trip in Northern Minnesota's BWCAW from Sommers Canoe Base with a Northern Tier Interpreter as the member of a Crew composed of SAA and PSA members. See the accompanying article in SBAFA for more information.

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or email in MS Word to:
reflections@holry.org
with the subject line
"Reflections."

Please submit photos in
high quality .jpg format.

**DEADLINE for next issue:
NOW.**

Correction Strokes

Every experienced canoeist knows from time-to-time you need to take a different stroke to correct the canoe's direction. The editor is taking a correction stroke now. In the last edition of *Reflections* (Vol. 17, #1), **Chuck Rose** should have been listed as the author of the story titled "Sig's Special Award." Sorry, Chuck.

Directors and Officers

NAME	OFFICE	TERM EXPIRES	HOME TELEPHONE
Pat Cox	Director, President (Exec. Comm.)	2011	
Mike Holdgrafer	Director, Vice President (Exec. Comm.)	2010	
Nigel Cooper	Treasurer (Exec. Comm.)	n/a	
Chuck Rose	Director, Secretary (Exec. Comm.)	2011	
Allen Rench	Director (Exec. Comm.)	2012	
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Steve Pratt	Director	2012	
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MOVING? Please let the Alumni Association know so they can update the Alumni database. Please provide your new address, phone number, etc. We will include your e-mail addresses in the member directory. Send your address changes or additions to P.O. Box 428, Ely, MN 55731-0428 or go to www.holry.org and click "Update Information." **The US Postal Service will forward your newsletter to you – HOWEVER – they do it at the Alumni Association's expense!** The statement "Address Services Requested" on the newsletter tells the USPS that we want them to forward your newsletter so you don't miss an issue. It also provides us with your new address. For each issue we have between 50-100 address corrections that we pay \$0.80 a piece to the USPS for this service. Please help us reduce this cost to the Association!

Editor's Campsite – Hol-Ry

by Mike Holdgrafer

Sitting down to write an editorial column is not always as simple as it may seem, especially when you only do so a few times a year. You go through moments of feast and famine with topics. Some may be relevant to you, the reader, while others clearly are not. As I prepared for this column, I was in a feast mode, with lots of ideas, but frankly, none were of any interest to you.

I contemplated using winter as a topic. I love winter and love the snow. The problem is that Oklahoma does not regularly cooperate with my desire. Winter did cooperate for the three weeks starting on Christmas Eve when we had a blizzard followed by several weeks of below normal temperatures. This allowed the snow to stick around for the longest period I (and natives) could recall. It was great and I used the opportunity like a scene out of *Manchurian Candidate* to educate my two daughters on how great winter is. Check back in twenty years on this one.

I also considered discussing my new theory: that people who run from their homes with video cameras to tape tornadoes bearing down on them in Oklahoma are the same people who, not knowing how to drive in snow, jump in their 2-wheel drive cars in the middle of a raging snowstorm and drive 5 mph up a hill until they manage to get stuck and block traffic in all directions on a four-lane road. Once stuck, they then jump out of their car wearing low-cut shoes and no coat. Don't even ask about the ones who wear shorts.

There had to be other relevant ideas, so I pulled out the

recent *Boundary Waters Journal* and read a couple articles therein. Great stories, especially the one about the guy who solos into the Boundary Waters and Quetico in the winter. But there it was again, winter. I was not ready to embark on this theme.

I asked myself what would an editor do? I thought about Bob Cary. Bob never seemed at a loss for stories, but did he have a secret? Then, it dawned on me. Bob kept things simple. For example, the issue about de-listing the gray wolf has many levels of complexity depending upon your perspective. Often, buried in this issue is some story about an interaction between a pet and a wolf. I remember Bob responding to a letter in the Ely Echo one time, at least twenty years ago, in which the writer complained about losing her pet to wolves. Bob's response was simple and to the effect that when you live in a wilderness area where wolves also live, you should not chain your pet outside unattended. Simple.

Simple. Maybe that's why we love coming back and heading into the woods. We leave the issues and complexities of our lives behind to truly enjoy the simple aspects of the northwoods. When we listen to the loon, the only interruption may be another distant loon's call, perhaps a barred owl or even the howl of a wolf. Simple.

When we sit around the campfire, we smell the wood smoke and are as much warmed by the fire as we are by the camaraderie of our companions or a dinner of fresh walleye. Simple.

As we paddle, we watch the motion of the blade as it feath-

ers, with water trailing off the tip, before it re-enters and is pulled towards the stern, creating eddies before it begins the entire cycle again. Simple.

The only scolding in the woods is that of the chickadee. Simple.

So, I leave each of you with one hope for 2010. Step away from the hustle and bustle of your world, wherever you may live, and take the time to enjoy something simple in your life. Maybe it is stopping while walking to your car after work to look

at a beautiful sunset. Maybe as you pick-up the morning newspaper you pause to listen to a songbird. Maybe it is a flight of Canada Geese as you take the kids to school.

Take the time to remember the simple things about the times you spent in the north-woods and find a way to stand on a distant lake and listen to night awaken as the sun fades.

Best wishes in 2010 for simpler times and good health!

– Red-Eye, Mike ■

2010 Rendezvous

by Allen Rench

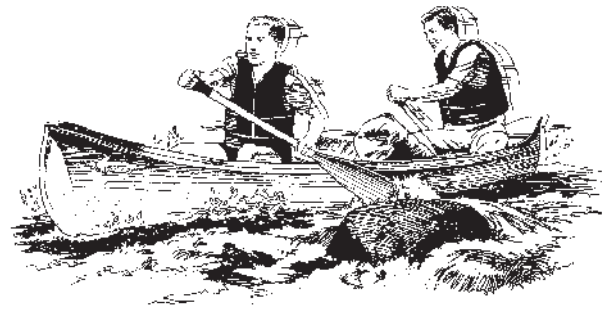
On the way out the door to work this morning there was a crisp coolness in the air. The first signs of fall are upon us. The maples have begun their magnificent transformation into infinite shades of gold, red, yellow and orange. But, I forced myself in a state of denial, trying not to acknowledge that winter was quickly approaching. Now don't get me wrong, I have a passion for winter but I just wanted to savor these last remaining days of summer just a little bit longer.

Regardless, it is time to start putting away the summer equipment and bring out the hunting gear. This year I have the privilege to be hunting with both of my younger sons, Quentin and Tate, and my daughter, Jayna, who was guide staff in 2008. We will rendezvous with Butch Diesslin, Nigel Cooper and sons at Butch's property in Cambridge, Minnesota. We have been able to share time with Pat Cox and other friends over the years too. Hunting is always fantastic, even though at times the harvest is not as productive as we would like. What makes this time so spe-

cial for me is the opportunity to decompress and to be in the company of family and friends that I have known for almost 40 years. We take time to find out what has been going on in each others lives, laugh share a meal and relish in the fortunes of the hunt.

These are friends that came into my life at the Base. My children have had to endure countless renditions of the same stories about these individuals as well as a laundry list of other North Woods adventures and adventurers. But to see their eyes light up when they finally put a face to the story is priceless. They have exclaimed: "Oh, so you're Crazy Joe," "That's Minnesota Jim?," "Now I know why they called him Brook" and "Ok, don't tell me, let me guess that's Coat Hanger." These are just a few of the names, faces and experiences that have anchored me forever to the North. I know I am not alone in this sentiment. Every other year I get to catch up with the characters of my past and meet new ones along the way at our rendezvous. They in turn are

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President's Canoe

by Patrick Cox

I am writing this as the new year begins, looking back on yet another canoe season that has ended for all three canoe bases of Northern Tier, while looking forward to this coming summer. For those of you who had the chance to visit one of the bases last summer, I am sure you have fond memories already stored away. You probably noticed significant change at the base you visited. It is funny how things change but always seem to remain the same. Each generation of Grubs and Leaders comes and goes with each generation of Charlie Guides yet the canoe trip we all enjoyed does not change much. The equipment changes from the 1920s to today; no more squishing bread loaves down to fit them in food canisters, no more wall tents, and they use mostly light weight canoes these days. But, the experience does not change. The sun still rises over Louisa, the loon still speaks to us on Kawnipi, and the sunset on Scout Lake in Bissett remains the same. Some of us were fortunate to work at all three canoe bases while others enjoyed the opportunity to explore new territory at one or two bases.

The change is never ending at our beloved canoe bases. Atikokan did not even have a building or a base in the 1970s

and well into the 1980s. We operated from the city park or one of the resorts in the area. We hauled everything for each trip from Ely except the items we purchased at the IGA in Atikokan. Today that base has more buildings than you could imagine; a dining hall, crew and staff cabins, sauna and shower facilities, and it is located on a beautiful lake just outside Atikokan. It is well worth going if you get the chance. Bissett has changed a great deal too. For those Charlie Guides slightly older than me, you remember fondly the same early stages of Bissett when we operated out of the town park. In the 1980s, we had a single building – small but nonetheless complete in that it had all we needed to outfit the trip. The 1970s and 1980s Bissett guides will remember the old wire frame from a mattress being used to cook bar-b-que chicken for the crews. Today, Bissett has crew and staff cabins and a separate shower and sauna building among other things, but it still has its first building. Ely has undergone a great deal of change over the years. Some Charlie Guides remember the TeePee, others the days when the Lodge was the main building on base. My generation remembers the tents – we lived in a tent all summer since there

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Chief Scout Executive Visits Northern Tier

by Mike Holdgrafer

It has been a long, long time since the Chief Scout Executive for the BSA visited any of the bases of the Northern Tier High Adventure Program, including the Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base in Ely. This past September, as invited guests of **Pat Cox**, SAA President and Northern Tier Committee member, **Bob Mazzuca** and his charming wife, **Nanette**, accompanied Pat on a flight from Dallas to Ely for the 2009 Wilderness Fishing Invitational. In addition to Bob, other dedicated Scouting volunteers from across the nation arrived in Ely to try their collective luck with local guides for walleye, smallmouth and northern pike in local lakes. Although the fishing was a little slow, or as **Bob Cary** would say, “the fishing was good but the catching was slow,” the record-setting cool temperatures of summer gave way to unseasonably warm conditions for the participants. While their husbands drowned minnows, the wives, led by **Carol Dowling** and **Karen Berg**, Accounting Specialist, enjoyed local attractions in Ely, including the North American Bear Center and International Wolf Center, together with some shopping and a visit to the Harvest Moon Festival.

Even though the fishing was slow, it did not diminish the spirits and camaraderie of all involved. It was evident everyone had good time, particularly when **Sparky Duroe**, event chairman and Northern Tier Committee member, conducted an auction for guides. The entire event, as reported to **Ray Wood**, Northern Tier



Bob Mazzuca, Chief Scout Executive, with a nice smallmouth he caught at the 2009 Wilderness Fishing Invitational.

Committee Chairman, raised over \$15,000 for the new Dining Hall and multi-use facility, and camperships.

This event, conceived by **Carl Boyles**, Director of Program at Northern Tier (who, coming from the Florida Sea Base, was very familiar with their tarpon tournament), offered Bob and the other individuals a first-hand opportunity to see the Northern Tier program, while hearing accounts about the program from Pat, **Kevin Dowling**, **Joe Mattson** and other members of the management team. With the opportunity to get out on-the-water to truly savor the beauty of Canoe Country, it was hoped that the Wilderness Fishing Invitational participants would return to their homes and spread the word among Scouting about the Northern Tier; that it is the

best kept secret in all of Scouting, something that many of us have known for decades. The best part is that it just gets better as facilities and equipment are upgraded.

If you are interested in participating in the 2010 Wilderness Fishing Invitational, September 7 – 10, 2010, contact Carl at [REDACTED].

By the way, **Bob Mazzuca** regularly posts a blog. The following is Bob's posting after visiting the Northern Tier last September:

Northern Tier – A Best Kept Secret We All Need To Share

I just finished a wonderful week participating in a first-ever fishing tournament at Northern Tier, the site of the BSA's National High Adventure Program located just outside of Ely, Minnesota. It was a great outing with an incredibly committed team of

people, some whom had been on the Northern Tier staff back in the '60s!

The bad news is that I did not catch a heck of a lot of fish.

The good news is that I was able to reconnect with the incredible beauty and pristine conditions of this wonderful outdoor Scouting resource that I believe deserves a second, if not a third, look when making your high-adventure plans.

Sure, we all know of the huge waiting lists for Philmont Scout Ranch because of its iconic stature, and the exciting draw of the Florida National High Adventure Sea Base. But, while you are waiting to get into these two destinations, why not give Northern Tier a try?

When you have the chance to breathe the clean air and take in the spectacular surroundings of an area bordered by the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Voyageurs National Park, and Canada's Quetico Provincial Park, it is an experience that you will never forget.

These are life-changing experiences, and we need to provide greater opportunities to share this wonderful national treasure with our Scouts. Instead of just looking west or south, also try looking north when recommending high-adventure trips in your councils.

We all know what a phenomenal metamorphosis occurs for our Scouts on high-adventure trips – send a boy on these journeys, and he comes back a man. I encourage our district executives and volunteer leaders to do some exploring of their own to add this destination to their high-adventure planning.

Thanks, Bob ■



Ensuring A Dream Becomes Reality

by Mike Holdgrafer

In another article, mention was made of the efforts to raise funds for the new Dining Hall and Convention Center. **Jim Sowell**, SAA member and long-time supporter, was approached by **Dave Hyink** to support this project. Jim graciously agreed to participate, but there was a surprise in store for Dave.

Jim has a deep and long-standing passion for the Lodge going back to his days while on the Sommers' staff. He has monitored the progress of its restoration and conversion to a museum and interpretative center. Jim has been active in many philanthropic causes, including being the lead benefactor as to an athletics museum at Texas Tech University. In talking to Dave, Jim wanted to ensure the Lodge's conversion to a state-of-the-art museum and interpretative facility was accomplished at the highest order. To ensure

this, Jim pledged \$200,000.

From **Dick Shank's** and my perspective, Jim's outstanding commitment will allow us to engage various professionals to transform the Lodge into a facility on par with facilities like the International Wolf center and the Minnesota Historical Society's modern center at its North West Company Fur Post in Pine City, Minnesota. To say we were speechless, as well as excited, as to Jim's gift is an understatement. What has been a dream will become reality. Efforts are underway to engage a professional consultant as to the design and implementation of the museum phase of the Lodge. Our goal is simple; a spectacular end result that will instill a passion in anyone who visits the Lodge... as well as a smile on the face of Jim.

Thank you, Jim! ■

President's Canoe *cont'd.*

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were no indoor living facilities for the staff. We also remember the many hikes to Flash Lake with crews off the road. It makes me wonder what the Charlie Guides of the 1930s and 1940s would think of Ely today with all the crew cabins, multiple shower and sauna facilities for male and female youth and male and female grubs. Ely is in the middle of planning a new dining hall to replace the one currently in use.

Yes, you read that correctly. The Ely canoe base is in the middle of building an entirely new dining hall that will serve its needs for a long time to come. The current facility was built in the 1950s and is too small for today's activities. It will be torn down late next year with a new facility to be built on the base. This year – 2010 – will be the last year of the existence of the dining hall. Many generations of Grubs, Leaders, and Charlie Guides

have gone through it en route to a great adventure in the wilderness or re-lived their canoe trip over fried chicken, chicken nuggets, pancakes, cake donuts, or whatever the food of the day was – which no matter how good it was could never compare to fresh wall-eye on the trail with some reconstituted eggs and hash-browns in the morning. As has been the case with the prior evolution of all three bases, the new dining hall will do its part to get the crews of tomorrow ready to go build their own experience in the wilderness as they come through seeking adventure and the personal growth for young and old alike that one can only develop from struggling with a heavy canoe or pack over backcountry trails for miles.

We will say goodbye to our old friend this year at the 2010 Reunion. We look forward to seeing you there.

– Red-Eye, Pat ■

2010 Rendezvous *cont'd.*

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creating new memories with old friends.

I am anxiously anticipating Rendezvous 2010 which is as always on Labor Day weekend. We are in full swing preparing for your arrival. We want to make this time as much fun for everyone as possible. We have invited our Fur Trade re-enactors back. They enjoyed watching us as much as we enjoyed talking with them. There will be activities for all to enjoy. While the adults are at Saturday's ban-

quet the kids can be spending the night at the International Wolf Center. You can register on line, get Rendezvous details and see who is coming all at www.holry.org.

To make this weekend bigger and better we need your help. Find an old friend, give them a blast from the past then invite them to join the fun. Bring family and friends so they too can put a face to that never ending story.

As always there will be a pot of coffee waiting for you on the camp fire. ■



2010 Alumni Wilderness Voyage – August 28 to September 4, 2010

by Alex Nepple



Hol-Ry!

This coming summer you are invited to the annual **Alumni Wilderness Voyage**. This is an opportunity for Sommers Alumni Association members and their qualified immediate family to be crew members on a 7-day canoe trip with a Northern Tier Interpreter. The Voyage will end on Friday so you may attend the SAA's Labor Day weekend Rendezvous.

Last summer, Northern Tier alumni traveled to Philmont Scout Ranch to go on a one-week trek alongside Philmont alumni. It was certainly an amazing experience and learning opportunity. **This year's trip is special, as Philmont and Sea Base alumni have been invited to join us on our Voyage to experience and learn more about the Northern Tier program.**

This is your opportunity to:

Re-Visit the canoe country in a Northern Tier "Crew"

Re-Connect with other former "Charlie Guides"

Re-Fresh your understanding of the Northern Tier canoeing program by experiencing it with a current **Interpreter**.

The Voyage:

Participants will be divided into crews of up to 8 participants and will travel under the guidance of a current **Northern Tier Interpreter** for the entire voyage. This will give each participant the opportunity to experience the current Northern Tier program trip, to experience how current procedures differ from the past, and to re-live some of the experiences of past wilderness canoeing voyages.

The Alumni Wilderness Voyages will all be entirely within the Boundary Waters

Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) in Minnesota, hence not require the citizenship documentation for travel in Canada.

Registration:

To register download the registration form at www.holry.org (under "Upcoming Events"). The cost is \$400 per person. This fee includes: BWCAW camping fees, trail food, Kevlar canoes, paddles, crew equipment (tents, stoves, etc), PFDs, packs, group equipment, on-base lodging, on-base meals, and the Northern Tier Interpreter (you don't get to keep him/her after the Voyage is done).

Upon receipt of fees and acceptance in the program you will receive a participant packet with information including a medical form, "swimmer" certification form, and a personal gear list.

Participants are responsible providing their own personal gear and for their transportation to and from the Charles L. Sommers National High Adventure Base near Ely, Minnesota.

Eligibility Requirements:

The Alumni Wilderness Voyage is an opportunity for members of the Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Philmont Staff Association ("PSA") and the Florida Sea Base Alumni & Friends Association ("SBAFA"). PSA and SBAFA members should register through their own association.

1. Be a current member of the Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association or an immediate family member of a member participating in the Voyage.
2. Be a registered member of the Boy Scouts of America.
3. Meet health and weight requirements, and present a completed Northern Tier medical form.
4. Meet the swimming requirements as a "swimmer" and present a completed Northern Tier swimming certification form.
5. Be 13 years old by September 1, 2010. Note: BSA registered, females must be 14 years old or 13 years old and have completed 8th grade.

The Schedule:

Saturday, August 28 – Arrive at Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base – Northern Tier program before 5:00 PM. Meet your Interpreter and fellow crew members for dinner. Begin your trip preparation and



2009 PSA Trek Crew

planning. Spend the night in the on-base cabins.

Sunday, August 29 – Pack your personal and crew gear. Start your voyage!

Sunday, August 29 to Friday, September 3 (“on-the-water” 5 nights, 6 days) – Enjoy the peace and solitude of wilderness canoe camping with your fellow crew members and Interpreter.

Friday, September 3 – Return to the Canoe Base in the afternoon for a sauna before supper in the Dining Hall. After supper, share trip experiences with the other alumni crews.

??? – Head for home with a pack of memories **or stay to participate in the Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association Rendezvous (Friday, September 3 – Monday, September 6).**

This year we have moved arrival back to 5 PM to allow more time for travel.

Outfitting will occur the next morning. The drive from Minneapolis – St. Paul International Airport (MSP) to the Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base – Northern Tier is approximately 5-1/2 hours. Be sure to choose a flight with an arrival time that allows sufficient time to claim your luggage and travel to Northern Tier. This is particularly important if you would like to share transportation to Northern Tier with other participants. If no early flights are available you may want to arrive the night prior (Friday). Note: We do not recommend flying to Duluth, MN due to reliability and limited rental car hours. ■



Lee Huckstep's Laker

Register Now

To register download the registration form at www.holry.org (under “Upcoming Events”)

Registration deadline is July 1, 2010.

Contact [REDACTED] with questions.

“Yoots” Reflect on 2009 PSA Trek



2009 PSA Trek “Yoots,” from left to right: Casey Dowling, Glenn Hartman-Mattson, Jacob Dowling and Jeff Touchette.

PSA Trek Crew 726-2 was comprised of trekkers from the Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association and the Philmont Staff Association. The crew included five youth participants, or “yoots,” as they were called by crew mates, mimicking the pronunciation of “youths” from the movie *My Cousin Vinny*. The following are the memorable reflections of four of the yoots; Jacob Dowling, Jeff Touchette, Casey Dowling and Glenn Hartman-Mattson.

I Want to Go Back to Philmont

by Jacob Dowling

Jacob, an SAA Trekker, was crew leader for PSA 726-2. Jacob served on the Northern Tier staff in 2009. He is the son of Kevin Dowling, General Manager of Northern Tier.

“After that view, it’s hard not to believe in a higher being.” Doug said this to me our first morning on the trail, shortly after I returned from watching sunrise from Window Rock. I immediately agreed, yet little did I know that Window Rock was just a tiny fraction of the breathtaking views that Philmont had to offer. Having spent the majority of my summer among the Boundary Waters lakes that surround Northern Tier, I was taken away by the variety of scenery that we encountered during our trek. I have never hiked any area of significant elevation and while climbing Mount Phillips was physically demanding, it provided a huge boost to my confidence. I know that I was beaming with pride at the summit and being able to share that moment with my dad and sister was incredible.

Down in the Florida Keys... the Florida Sea Base Joins the Exchange Program

by Lee Huckstep

Your High Adventure opportunities have expanded. Beginning in 2011, you will be able to participate in the **Coral Reef Sailing Adventure** of the Florida Sea Base.

This opportunity is the result of the expansion of the **Exchange Program** between the Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association (“SAA”) and the Philmont Staff Association (“PSA”), to now include the Florida Sea Base Alumni and Friends Association (“SBAFA”). You now have the opportunity to participate in High Adventure programs for all three of the BSA National High Adventure bases. When you have earned the participant’s award for all three bases, you will be eligible for the Triple Crown award, the award given to those who have earned participants’ patches at Northern Tier, Philmont and the Sea Base.

The first **Coral Reef Sailing Adventure** is tentatively scheduled for February 2011. Adventure participants spend six nights on the water and a seventh night at the Islamorada Base in the Florida Keys (Seven days in total). Partici-



pants sail the Florida Keys in a 40-42 foot sailing craft, accommodating up to 8 participants, and get to experience one-of-a-kind snorkeling and fishing. A professional captain will instruct participants in navigation, fishing and sailing and remain aboard for the entire trip. Participants have influence on their sailing plan, but ultimately the sailing conditions and captain determine the final course.

Just as always has been the case for the SAA Voyage and the PSA Trek, participants must meet all participation requirements. Participation requirements include:

- Be a BSA member in good standing;
- Be a member of the SAA,

PSA or SBAFA in good standing;

- Meet minimum age requirements;
- Meet health requirements;
- Meet weight requirements;
- Knowledge and compliance of “Youth Protection” guidelines;
- Knowledge and compliance of “Leave No Trace” principles;
- Any additional requirements which may vary based on the program.

With the expansion of the Exchange Program, the SAA, PSA and SBAFA will host each other every third year on a rotating basis, with the exception of 2011, when both the PSA and SBAFA will host. In order to plan your progress to the Triple Crown Award, please note the schedule below to take advantage of these opportunities:

- 2010 – SAA hosts.
- 2011 – Both PSA and SBAFA host.
- 2012 – SAA hosts.
- 2013 – SBAFA hosts.
- 2014 – PSA hosts, with continuing rotation thereafter.

Specific details will be published in the summer of 2010. ■

The two days that took us from Clear Creek to Carson Meadows were my favorite part of the Trek. Hiking along the Rayado as it grew from a shallow stream to a full river was awesome and the trail in Rayado Canyon offered the best views of the trip. If I was making an itinerary, it would include that part of the trail and an overnight stay at Crag's Camp.

While the scenery was beautiful and not at all what I expected, the most impressive part of Philmont was the staffed camps. I was blown away that the Ranch is able to find so many talented, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable young men and women to spend their summers in the backcountry. I feel like some of the staffers should have record deals instead of playing for a bunch of Scouts in a cabin without electricity at Cypher's Mine.

Overall, my Philmont experience was fantastic. In fact, just as Lee (Huckstep) predicted, it only took until the car ride home from the airport that I found myself thinking "I want to go back to Philmont."

At the end of the Trek, Jacob was presented with the Triple Crown Award, the award for persons having completed High Adventure programs at all three BSA High Adventure bases.

Like Nothing I Have Ever Experienced

by Jeff Touchette

Jeff was a PSA Trekker. The PSA Trek was his first High Adventure experience.

My father asked if I would go on the PSA trek with him. I had heard many things about Philmont from him and my brother, Andrew, both of

whom had already ventured out to God's Country. I felt inexperienced because I had never been on a backpacking trip. I was unsure of what to expect, but agreed. We arrived at base camp and I met the rest of my crew. The first day seemed to take forever since we had to wait around to get everything we needed for our trek. I was excited and just wanted to get out onto the trail.

On the first day, we hiked to Cimarroncito. I was happy to be out of base camp and in the backcountry. Our Ranger, Eric Niehaus, really helped us out and made sure we did everything correctly — especially hanging bear bags. The crew was starting to come together and learn all about each other. The food was a lot better than I expected. The first night I learned we had to eat everything we made. Luckily, we had a former Ranger in our crew, Stephen, who could eat everything.

The next day we hiked to Cypher's Mine where my dad worked in 1972. It was exciting to be in the same places he had been so many years ago. The next day was the best day of the whole trip; we climbed Mt. Phillips. It was a milestone for the entire crew. The crew all came together on the top of the mountain, but we had to climb down fast because of a lightning storm. We stopped at Clear Creek where we had an Italian birthday feast honoring Reade. The best camp that we visited was Fish Camp where my dad was camp director in 1977. He really enjoyed the camp as did the rest of the crew. On our last night we stayed at Carson Meadows. The staff welcomed us and hung out with us. The next day we hiked through Abre, where my dad was camp director in 1976, and were picked up at

the Zastro turn around and returned to base camp.

The trip was amazing and it was like nothing I have ever experienced. My favorite part of the trip was getting to know my crew. I also enjoyed being with my dad at his favorite place in the world.

The Best Feeling of My Life

by Casey Dowling

Casey joined her brother, Jacob, and father, Kevin, for her first High Adventure experience.

I was a little hesitant when my dad first brought on the idea of Philmont. I wondered if I could handle it and how I would like spending a week in the woods. The trip turned out to be a wonderful learning experience. Backpacking was a challenge, but it was worth it.

The views along the hike and the programs at the staffed camps motivated me to keep going. I learned a lot about myself after spending a week in the woods. I realized that I was a lot stronger both mentally and physically. Making it to the top of Mount Phillips after a hard climb was the best feeling in my life. I was proud of what I had accomplished and felt that I could do anything that I put my mind to.

The Philmont organization impressed me throughout the week. Eric Niehaus was a great Ranger who taught us everything we needed to know, and more. The staff members at each camp were very welcoming and always made sure that we were entertained. I have not experienced a trip at Northern Tier, but I have heard many stories and have witnessed how the organization runs.

It was awesome to be able to experience Philmont with my dad and brother. After

making it through the Philmont trek, I am willing to do Northern Tier, and maybe go back to Philmont for a second trek.

You Can See the Magic Begin

by Glenn Hartman-Mattson

The PSA Trek was Glenn's first High Adventure experience. She was joined by her father, Joe Mattson, Associate Director of Program for Northern Tier.

Philmont is a place where sidewalks and careers fade away and the simple things in life begin; a place where strength is tested, doubts are conquered, and life long memories are formed.

I not only experienced the greatness of Philmont, but I was able to experience it with my father. The whole journey really began when we did that first training hike with sandbags in our newly-purchased backpacks. On that hike, I learned that my dad had done solo hikes in Death Valley and the Grand Canyon, and rock climbed, when in his twenties, with one of the biggest names in rock climbing. Maybe he had told me this before, but I had never realized how remarkable it was. Growing up in Ely, Minnesota, I did not really appreciate the gift of living in one of the most pristine areas in the world, the Boundary Waters. But, I realize it now. I now understand why my dad has worked for Northern Tier for twenty-seven years. As my dad said to me at Philmont, "you can see the magic begin" when you look around at all the people about to start a trek into the "Great Outdoors," whether it is New Mexico or Minnesota. The magic may be the Tooth of Time at sunset, canoeing on
(continued on page 19)

Réal Bérard Continues to Support the SAA

by Chuck Rose

Réal Bérard is familiar to many Charlie Guides for two reasons. First, his illustrated canoe maps were one of the main reasons that Northern Tier set up the “satellite base” in Bissett, Manitoba. Several maps include the routes that Scout crews travel, but Bérard’s dozen maps cover areas from Hudson’s Bay to the Minnesota border. The maps, mainly created in the 1960s and 70s, have made him world famous. Second, those who have attended any of the last four Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc.’s Rendezvous are familiar with the artwork that he has donated to us. Live auctions of his donated artwork, conducted by **Cory Kolodji**, has led to over \$3,000 being raised for staff scholarships, along with all of us being fantastically entertained by Cory.

A few other items about Réal are noteworthy. Like fellow honorary SAA alumnus **Sig Olson**, Réal has a school named after him. The Réal Bérard High School is located in St. Pierre-Jolys, Manitoba, while the Sigurd Olson Elementary School is located in Golden Valley, Minnesota. Réal is also an award-winning book and magazine illustrator, ice sculptor and short film animator. I was lucky enough to have tea with him in Winnipeg a few years ago and learned that his animated short film *Jours de Plaine* was Canada’s entry into the Cannes Film Festival in 1990. He is also the subject of two National Film Board of Canada films; *Snow Dreams* and *Voyage au Nord du Monde*.

I first met Réal in 1982 when **Bill Conaway** and I



The Stone Canoe. As explained by Réal Bérard, the old voyageurs said that “little people” lived in rock cliffs beside lakes, rivers, and waterfalls. At night, they claimed to have heard voices, laughter and singing. Some had seen “little people” come out of their homes in stone canoes, then paddle back into their mysterious world when they realized human beings were watching. This painting depicts a stone canoe emerging with its passengers before it returns to its mysterious world.

managed to find a day to sneak away from Bissett to visit him in downtown Winnipeg. We found out that twenty years earlier he had paddled the same routes we were paddling, but he still remembered many of the rapids and portages on the *Sasaginnigak Canoe Country* and *Little Grand Rapids Canoe Routes* maps like it had been yesterday. Jumping ahead nearly another twenty years, I saw a painting that he had done for the *Festival of the Voyageur*, the largest winter gathering of its kind in western Canada. I was impressed with the painting enough to renew my acquaintance with Réal and asked him for permission to use the painting for a T-shirt at the 2002 Rendezvous. He scoffed at me and told me two things: first, the painting was done for the *Festival* organizers, so I’d need to ask them for permission, which I later did; and second, he said that he would paint an original for the SAA. He asked when I would like

the painting done. Off the cuff, I just said the end of April would be sufficient lead time for the Rendezvous. I then forgot about that deadline.

Late on the night of April 30th, my phone rang. “I’ve got your painting, Chuck, where should I go to give it to you.” Réal had driven 400 miles to Sartell, Minnesota to make the deadline. What a surprise! The least I could do was to invite him, together with his wife, **Eva**, over for ice cream. We had a wonderful visit. The painting was “stored” on my wall above my desk until the Rendezvous except for when **Joel Sheagren** made a digital scan of it for the SAA as Réal gave us permission for this and other uses as well. I saved my money so that I could bid on it, but **Lucy Diesslin’s** \$500 bid kept me on the sidelines. That amount surprised Réal too. He immediately offered to do another for us. This pattern has been repeated every two years since then. This year for the 2010 Rendezvous, we will

auction off the fifth of his original paintings *The Stone Canoe*. I hope that the painting again will go for more than I can afford.

Thank you Réal for your continuing support of the SAA and getting young people into the beautiful Northwoods’ wilderness. Please check out Bérard’s gallery of other original paintings at www.galerieriviereauxrats.com. His illustrated canoe maps are available from the Manitoba government. Write for details: *Surveys & Mapping Branch, 1007 Century St, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3H 0W4.* ■

New Online System

The association has a **new online alumni system**.

To access it you must have a current email address on file. If you have not received an email from us recently, please let us know your current email address by visiting:

www.update.holry.org

The online alumni system features include:

- Searchable alumni directory;
- Update your own alumni record in the directory;
- Join or renew membership;
- Save trees by choosing to receive mailings and newsletters by email only.

2008 David Thompson Brigade: Rocky Mountain House to Old Fort William by North Canoe

by Bill Erickson

When you attend Northern Tier for the first time, you are unaware of how it can change your life. I was no exception. My first trip lead to the second which eventually lead to paddling the Boundary Waters Fur Trade Route in 2000, an interest in the fur trade history and an introduction to David Thompson.

David Thompson was an amazing individual by any measure. Schooled at the Grey Coat Charity School in London, he had an interest in math and was on a path to become a member of the Royal Navy. In 1784, the Hudson's Bay Company was looking for apprentices at the school and he was signed to a seven-year contract. At the age of 14, he departed for Hudson Bay, never to return to England.

While stationed in present day Saskatchewan, he fell, broke his leg and was moved to Cumberland House where he spent a year recovering. During that time, he met Phillip Turnor, the HBC's Chief Surveyor and learned how to determine location using a sextant. Thompson did not feel the HBC was living up to its contract that called for exploration as well as fur trade. Therefore, when his contract expired in 1797, he left the HBC to become an employee of their bitter rival, the North West Company. This move allowed Thompson to do the exploring and mapping he loved. He mapped over one-sixth of the North American continent and is arguably, the greatest cartographer in North American history.

Thompson was much more



Brigade Route



Bill Erickson talking to kids at Emmo.

than a great cartographer. During his travels he filled more than 77 field journals with information on locations, the aboriginal people, plants, animals and geology. He spoke native languages and dialects and was respected by the

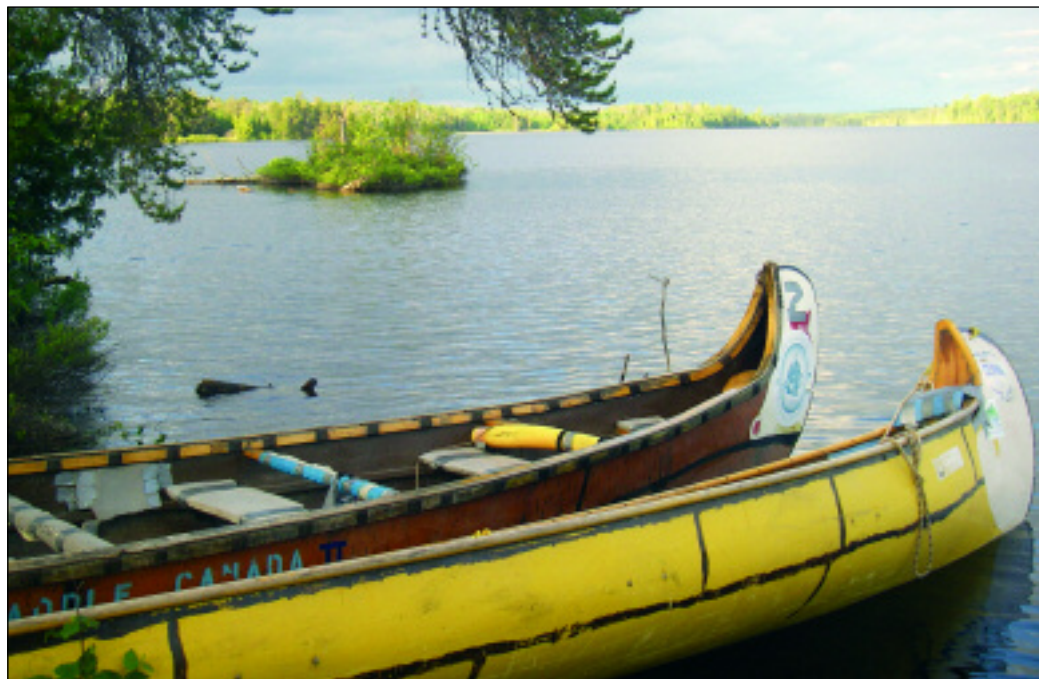
natives who called him Koo-koo-sint, the man who looks at the stars. He was a man of high moral character who opposed the use of alcohol in the fur trade. Forced to take rum on his trips, he managed to pack the barrels such that they would be

broken and their contents spilled. He married Charlotte Small, the daughter of NWC partner Patrick Small and a Cree woman, ala the custom of the north. However, contrary to the prevailing custom of leaving their country wives behind when they returned to "civilization," Thompson took Charlotte with him when he returned to Montreal. They were married for 57 years and had thirteen children.

Thompson's accomplishments were amazing. While in the north for 29 years, he traveled over 66,700 miles by canoe, horseback and foot. In the first 13 years of their marriage, Charlotte traveled over 16,000 miles with David. He mapped most of Canada west of Hudson Bay; Lewis and Clark used his information. After retiring from the backcountry, he participated in the International Boundary Commission that determined the US-Canadian border from Lake of the Woods to Lake Superior.

In June 1807, Thompson passed through what is today called Howse Pass. Howse Pass is located southwest of Jasper and provided a path through the mountains in the search for a transcontinental water route to the Pacific. In the spring of 1808, Thompson left Rocky Mountain House, Alberta for Fort William (present day Thunder Bay, Ontario) to report his findings to the other partners of the North West Company.

Fast-forward 197 years to Edmonton. Andy Korso, a cartographer and historian with a passion for David Thompson, (continued on next page)



North Canoes at Tanner Lake campsite in the Quetico.

(continued from previous page)

wanted to find a way to commemorate David Thompson, Charlotte Small and his 1808 trip. He appeared on a local talk show that resulted in a meeting with two other Edmontonians, Ted Bentley and Mark Lund. The result of this meeting and much work by them and many others was the 2008 David Thompson Brigade – a brigade of 17 North Canoes and over 300 participants that on May 10th, 2008 left Rocky Mountain House on the North Saskatchewan River and paddled to Old Fort William arriving July 12th. One of the participants was Laverne Thompson, a 7th generation descendent of David and Charlotte.

The 2008 David Thompson Brigade Society provided the over-all organization for the event. This included route plans and maps, community interactions and the overall safety plan for the trip. It was up to the individual crews to recruit members, obtain a North Canoe and provide the necessary ground support

(minimum of two people and two vehicles). Paddle Canada, the recreational canoeing association of Canada, was interested in sponsoring two canoes and were looking for paddlers. In February 2008 e-mails were sent to various canoe organizations in Canada and the United States. One of these e-mails ended up in **Sharon Colht's** and my mailboxes. We applied and became members of the Paddle Canada II crew, being two of four Americans to participate in the Brigade. We initially planned on paddling two weeks, but they were in need of paddlers and by the time the dust settled we joined the Brigade at The Battlefords, Saskatchewan and paddled 53 days to Old Fort William.

Thus we began a trip that, much like my first Northern Tier trip, will have a lifetime impact on us. It was so much more than a 53-day canoe trip. Yes, we traveled over 1,350 miles with the Brigade; paddled through all or part of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario; found we could paddle at 50 strokes a minute for

eight hours a day or more; experienced the Saskatchewan River and its winds, the big lakes of Manitoba, paddled against the current on the Winnipeg River that was near flood stage, paddled the length of Rainy Lake in one day and experienced the Quetico in North Canoes. But a big part of the trip was about people; the people we canoed with and the people we met along the way.

Twenty canoeists participated on our crew. Nine canoeists were with our crew at least 50 days – three paddlers were close friends from Vancouver Island, BC; two were from Alberta, an adventurer and a hiker/canoelist; one was from Saskatchewan, a community planner and former minister; our crew leader was from Ontario, a young retiree from the company that developed the Blackberry; and Sharon and I were from Illinois. The remaining eleven were with us from 1 day to 2 weeks and were from across central Canada.

This diverse, strong willed group learned to work together as a team and strong friend-

ships have been forged. Our days were long. Up at 4:30, to pack our personal gear and take down our tent, eat breakfast, help pack crew gear and be on the water at 6:00 (or earlier). We rotated duties with six people paddling and the rest on ground crew. Many days there were crew change points along the way so everyone had a chance to paddle (and rest) on those days.

We would generally reach our destination mid-to-late afternoon. By this time the ground crew had bought groceries and other needed supplies, set up the crew gear and had some FOOD ready for us. We went through an amazing number of calories and found that we had to “refuel” every 1.5 to 2 hours when paddling or we would hit the wall and have zero strength.

It was then set-up tents, don our voyageur garb and get back on the water for our formal arrival – the show as we called it. After that it was eat dinner, have a team meeting to get the latest information from the captain meeting's and then prepare lunch and gear for the next day. It was usually bedtime by ten.

The community interactions were a special part of the trip. We had planned interactions at 30 different communities. These ranged from a formal arrival and a meet-and-greet event to parades, fireworks, park dedications, free meals and entertainment and dances (only the younger members of the brigade had the energy to attend these – the average age of the participants was 51 years' old).

Our formal arrivals consisted of ten to fifteen north canoes paddling with flags flying and ending with some type of formation; string of pearls (canoes paddling in a single-

file straight line), figure eight or just circle up. We would then fire the gun, charge the shore (the goal was to be the first to get to shore, but not touch ground; if you did, you lost), and request permission to come ashore. Once ashore, there would be ceremonies with local dignitaries and mingling with the people who came out to see our arrival.

As part of the Canadian 1967 centennial celebration, a North Canoe race was held from Rocky Mountain House to Montreal with each province/territory having a team. **Don Meany** of X-Y Paddle Company in Atikokan paddled on the Ontario team and there were at least four paddlers from that race that were part of the 2008 brigade. Often people would come up to us and thank us for stopping at their community so their grandchildren could see the north canoes arrive just like they did when they were young in 1967. At a remote crew-change point in Manitoba, over 50 local residents came out just to see the canoes arrive and change crews. No canoe was there more than fifteen minutes.

The kids loved our arrival. They would climb into our canoe and we would show them how to hold the paddle

and switch sides (we paddled one person per seat and had to switch sides every minute to be able to sustain our paddling rate). We can still see their smiles.

Our welcome in all the communities was very warm and genuine. The host often provided dinner and we were even served a 5:30 sit-down breakfast at the Senior Center in Lac du Bonnet. James Smith Cree Reservation dug a trail up the steep riverbank so we could more easily reach the camping area they had cleared for us. Square dancers and fiddlers performed and meals were cooked on newly built fire pits. After being welcomed to shore, we were led by bagpipers, drummers and Cree in native dress in a parade to the picnic grounds. And yes, that combination was seen in many communities. The next morning, the Shaman blessed the brigade before we left so that we would have safe travel.

Nathan Prather commented in his article *Way, Way, Way Up North* (Reflections, Summer/Fall 2007) about the hospitality of the people in the area they canoed on their way to the Arctic Ocean. We found the same. When crossing the large Lake Manitoba, we encountered wind and rain and were

grounded, a degrade in the vernacular of the voyageurs. The ten North Canoes pulled to shore on a farmer's pasture. Sixty cold, soaking-wet voyageurs headed across the field, spooking the cattle and knocked on the farmhouse door. The family welcomed us like long lost friends, fed, and helped contact our ground crews. They then helped bring the canoes up so that they could be loaded on the trailers.

The Brigade gave us many things. We came to appreciate even more the Canadian canoeing heritage. Recently the canoe was named one of the seven wonders of Canada. In communities like Cumberland House where Samuel Hearne of the HBC established their first fort inland from Hudson Bay in 1774, canoeing is a huge part of their being. Canoe races for teenagers were part of the festivities that welcomed us and it is the home of former World Champion canoeist Solomon Carriere. Solomon lead us thru the delta to the community and we are still trying to figure out how he could "magically" switch sides without missing a stroke or seeing the paddle actually move across the canoe. The next day he was at the landing when we departed and gave tips to paddlers. Cumberland House opened their high school to the brigade so that we could have 24-hour access to showers and their computer room so we could communicate with "the outside world." It was yet another example of the warmth, helpfulness and openness of the people of the Canadian North.

The Brigade taught us about teamwork. Paddling a 325 lb., 26 ft long canoe for as much as 64 miles in a day requires teamwork. If one person is out of sync, you feel it and you slow down. If every-

one does not switch sides at the same time, the canoe will capsize. Efficient and timely setup and teardown of camp is needed if you are going to get everything done and still have time to shower and rest. Yes, we did learn how to function as a team of strong-willed individuals.

And we learned about ourselves. We never thought we could paddle COMFORTABLY at the rate we did – but we did. We thrived on a 53-day, long and intense trip – before the trip we wondered if we could. As much as we also love paddling local rivers and the BWCAW/Quetico, we found another paddling world that that has every bit as much of a hold on our paddling passions as our previous interests.

There were four wildness sections on the trip where we camped without the ground crews support. During the second one, a voyageur had written on the bow of their canoe "All men die... some never live." I am sure that if we all continue to live the adventure that started with your experience at Northern Tier that will not be said of us. ■

Brigade Statistics

THE VOYAGEURS

- 289 paddlers
- 67 went "all the way to Thunder Bay"
- Over 7,500 people-days paddled
- 19 Dedicated Ground Support
- 30% were women
- 11 under 20
- 11 in 70s
- 2 over 80
- Average age: 51

THE JOURNEY

- 9 teams paddled the entire 2029 mi.
- Canoes paddled over 22,370 mi.



Parade upon arrival at Lac du Bonnet.

Points North

by Mike Holdgrafer

For generations, Charlie Guides have spoken among themselves of awaiting adventures while pouring over maps of waterways flowing to “points north.” Books like *Canoeing With the Cree*,



York Factory logo

recounting Eric Severeid's 1930 trip from Fort Snelling to York Factory are mentioned. Names like the Hayes, Nelson, Churchill and God's are spoken, together with the Thelon, Coppermine and Mackenzie. A “Bay Trip” means but one trip; to Hudson Bay. Any other reference is blasphemy. Rapids are not only impassable, but portages around the rapids may cover miles and require multiple trips. Insects are so thick headnets are required. Ice may still exist at July's end while the sun may dip and not disappear on the horizon. Man may not necessarily at the top of the food chain in these wilderness areas. A mistake can have dire consequences, including death. Chiseled by summers in the Boundary Waters, Quetico, White Otter and Atikaki, and fueled by accounts of those who have ventured before them, small groups of Charlie Guides continue to come together and plan lifetime adventures to “points north.”

For many years, **Bob O'Hara**, a Northern Tier Committee and SAA member, has presented lectures on the many arctic and sub-arctic trips he has taken. In addition, many other alumni have returned to share memories and knowledge of expeditions they undertook, in turn serving as inspiration and mentors for some Charlie Guides in the

audience. In fact, this is a natural fit for SAA alumni when considered further.

This past June, **Rolland White** and **Dave Hyink** came back to the Base and presented PowerPoint slide presentations to inspire the staff. The following capture the spirit of their adventures after having been Charlie Guides.

From the Ross River (Yukon Territory), Across the Continental Divide, Down the South Nahanni and Liard to Fort Simpson.
“We realize the seriousness of our predicament, but feel confident in our ability to overcome our problem.”

July 18 – Day 28

On June 21, 1965, Charlie Guides **Bob Henry**, **Rolland White**, **Bruce Tannehill**, **Marc Wermager** and **David Wolfe** started up the Ross River in the Yukon Territory for the Canadian continental divide. Father Riguard, a local priest who had lived in the area and traveled the bush for fourteen years, believed the group could make it up the Ross, but doubted they could make the continental divide or the Nahanni. Forty-nine days later, 68-year old Gus Krause, who lived in a cabin near some hot springs on the South Nahanni, told the Charlie Guides they were the first individuals to cross from the headwaters of the Ross to the South Nahanni. In fact, the only story he had ever heard was about two men who tried it in the winter of 1898, but he couldn't recall whether they had made it. He was sure no one had ever done it by canoe. After Nahanni Butte, the five men entered the Poplar River,



Starting Out – Ross River – June 21.

followed by the Liard, and ended their journey at Fort Simpson.

Rolland White presented slides of his 1965 trip to the Northern Tier staff this past June late one evening. There was nothing modern about their adventure; they traveled in two wood and canvas canoes, a Chestnut and an Old Town. Both canoes took a beating as they were paddled, poled, lined, dragged, portaged and swamped. From a reading of the trip journal on [redacted], it did not sound like Rolland and his fellow Charlie Guides were far behind, but it is clear they were both mentally and physically tough. They carried food typical of the era with them; baking bannock, cooking starches, boiling tea and mixing “rootin-tootin raspberry” drink. Fish supplemented their diet, as did a moose that they shot, butchered, ate and smoked for later consumption. On Day 48, the five men consumed 189 pancakes in a pancake eating contest.



Drink Mix

Given the conditions, repairs to equipment were constant. The first major incident saw the group lose two of their five paddles. One Charlie

Guide was tasked to carve a replacement paddle. This was but a small part of the incident, for the Chestnut was severely damaged and required repairs before proceeding further. The Charlie Guides built nine reinforcing ribs, soaked and steamed them into shape; built and replaced planking and repaired the damaged canvas. This all took place around July 18 – Day 28; but as the quote above stated in their journal, these individuals, honed as Charlie Guides, were confident in their ability to overcome what was clearly a serious situation. This would not be the last such incident. Later in their trip, the group would replace broken ribs on both of the canoes, again building replacement ribs by hand and



Continental Divide – Day 22



Canoe Repairs



Splitting Spruce Ribbs

steaming them into shape. Each time the Charlie Guides persevered and overcame the challenge before them.

The gravity of their situations and the overall achievement of this group of Charlie Guides were not lost on the Northern Tier staff that attended Rolland's presentation last June. The slides that Rolland showed (Rolland's camera was one of the few cameras that was not damaged by water) were incredible and fully captured the scope and nature of the physical obstacles these Charlie Guides overcame. In preparing to write about Rolland's adventure, I read their 42-page journal, reviewed Rolland's slides again and then researched the Nahanni on the Internet. Their feat of almost forty-five years ago is even more remarkable today. The following comes from Parks Canada website and describes a portion of the wilderness area Rolland and his fellow Charlie Guides traversed:

Nahanni National Park Reserve of Canada protects a portion of the Mackenzie Mountains Natural Region offering the adventurous visitor a wilderness experience. A key feature of the park is the Naha Dehé (South Nahanni River). Four great canyons line this

spectacular whitewater river. At Nailicho (Virginia Falls) the river plunges in a thunderous plume. The park's sulphur hot-springs, alpine tundra, mountain ranges, and forests of spruce and aspen are home to many species of birds, fish and mammals....The park was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1978.

Accompanying this article are some photos from Rolland's slide show for a taste of the adventure these Charlie Guides faced. It is well worth the effort to step back into 1965 and read about the experience

including former CBS newsmen Eric Sevareid and described in *Canoeing with the Cree*. The crew traveled by automobile from Ely to Winnipeg and by air from Winnipeg to Norway House. After claiming their gear from the warehouse at the Hudson Bay Company Store, their route included paddling and portaging through three watersheds (Nelson, Hayes, and God rivers) to God's Lake; then down the God's River, to the Hayes and on to York Factory. They paddled around Marsh Point and then "tracked" back up the Nelson



Virginia (Nailicho) Falls – 294 feet.

of Bob Henry, Rolland White, Bruce Tannehill, Marc Wermager and David Wolfe. Perhaps someday another generation of Charlie Guides, outfitted with today's technology, will follow in the footsteps of these five Charlie Guides.

1969 Hudson Bay Trip Crew has 40th Reunion by Dave Hyink

On June 10, 2009, **Wes Stone, Peter Vial, Dave Greenlee and Dave Hyink** reunited to celebrate the 40th anniversary of their canoe trip to York Factory. They shared their slides and stories with the 2009 Northern Tier Staff on Alumni Day – the final day of Seasonal Staff Training.

Their 1969 trip retraced a portion of the fur trade route traveled by numerous parties,

to a point near Mile 352 of the Canadian National Railroad where they flagged-down a passenger train for the 36-hour ride back to Winnipeg.

The reunion was a very special time for Stone, Vial, Greenlee and Hyink as it marked the first time since the end of the 1969 trip that all four had been together as a crew. ■



Left to right: Marc Wermager, Bruce Tannehill, Rolland White, Dave Wolfe, Bob Henry looking out at Great Slave Lake.



Dave Greenlee and Pete Vial on the God's River.



"Have you ever stood where the silences brood and the vast horizons begin...." Robert Service



Dave Hyink, Peter Vial, Dave Greenlee and Wes Stone at York Factory (August 1969).



Dave Greenlee, Dave Hyink, Peter Vial and Wes Stone at the Sommers Base (June 2009).

Seasonal Staff Training – Past and Future

by Mike Holdgrafer

In lieu of recounting what various SAA individuals contributed in terms of talent and time in 2009 during seasonal staff training, I've elected instead to publish the seminar sessions conducted last year on June 10th which lists their names. Many of the volunteers assisted on days other than June 10th. For example, **Dick Shank** coordinated two days of wilderness first-aid training for the staff, assisted by **Angela Stuart** (At that time, the Recruiting Coordinator), and others.

If you were one of last year's volunteers, let me again express my appreciation. As for 2010 seasonal staff training, you will be hearing from me. If you are reading this and did not participate last year, here's your chance. Simply drop me an email at mike.holdgrafer@dtag.com.

Please look over last year's seminars. We want to add MORE topics to refine the skill and knowledge of the staff. If you see something is omitted, please let me know. More importantly, please let me know YOU have agreed to present such seminar. **The seminar day is June 10th.** Like staff work week, meals and lodging will be arranged on Base at no cost. If you cannot make June 10, consider coming up between May 31 and June 10. Other training opportunities exist, as do work opportunities. Can't make those dates? Then, please read the separate article about SAA volunteers who contributed part of their 2009 summer (or all of it).



Rolland White standing near 1,400 year-old White Cedar on Basswood Lake.

2009 Seminar Topics Canoe Country Weather 60 Minutes

Will summer ever arrive? What will tomorrow's weather be? What are those clouds to the northwest? Learn about north country weather patterns and how to forecast weather while on the water. Presented by **Butch Diesslin**, a Somers Alumni Association founding Director and retired professor from Vermillion Community College who has worked at the Base and volunteered for over 40 years.

Storm-Proofing Your Camp 50 Minutes

Cliff Jacobson, one of North America's most respected outdoors writers and wilderness paddlers, brings his decades of experience and skills to teach you on the forgotten skills to storm-proof your camp against Canoe Country's weather. The trading post has several books authored by him. Cliff is an annual speaker at Canoeconia, the world's largest paddle-

sports exposition each year. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from a master. The alternative may be a wet camp, wet gear and dampened spirits! Cliff will be assisted by **Chris Bursch**.

Nature Hike 110 Minutes

There's more to the Northwoods than loons, bears and evergreens, and your crews will be asking you questions regarding the flora and fauna around you. The good news is that this nature hike will help expand your knowledge of the trees, plants, birds and other wildlife which inhabit the boreal forest. **Dick Shank**, M.D., the "Base Doctor" and SAA Director, will take small groups on a hike to Blackstone and Secret Lakes, sharing his years of Northwoods' experience as a researcher, will lead the hike. He will be assisted by **John Duke**, History Director for the Base who also brings his knowledge to the hike. Please wear adequate footwear for a hike... and maybe bug repellent.

Canoe Country Water Quality 50 Minutes

Why is Argo Lake crystal clear, while Darky Lake's water is tea-colored? What is the quality of the water you paddle over daily? Chuck Rose, who worked at the Base in the 1980s and is now an Associate Professor at St. Cloud State University, explains how lakes work and the type of lakes in the BWCAW and Quetico, touching on trip planning, natural history and fish ecology.

Advanced Paddling and Instructing Your Crews 110 Minutes

If you haven't seen it, you will soon. Your crew embarks on its trip and zig-zags down the lake. What will you do? **Terry Schocke**, retired Director of Program for the Northern Tier, returns as an SAA alumni member to share his secrets on how to help instruct novice crews to avoid the "International Weave" down the lake. Along the way, Terry will instruct you on advanced paddling strokes, such as the slip stroke, to improve your own skills. Assisting Terry will be Zane Beaton, former SAA Director who worked on the Base in the late 1960s. Bring a PFD and paddle.

Geocaching 110 Minutes

Geocaching continues to grow in popularity worldwide as more and more people use GPS units. You've gotten the basics already, but now it's your chance to really learn more



SAA Volunteers with **Butch Diesslin** on Basswood.

about how to use a GPS and participate in geocaching. **Bill Erickson**, former staff member from 2000 and 2004, and who designed the geocaching program, takes participants on an actual adventure to locate some nearby public geocaches. Wear appropriate footwear and if you have a GPS, please bring it.

Advanced Photography 50 Minutes

When **Steve Niedorf** guided at the Base, he had a huge moustache. He's lost that but never lost his passion for photography, which has been his career. Steve brings his professional skills to the Base, not only as the "Official Staff Photo Photographer," but to share the knowledge and experience he has developed over the years to help you take better quality photos of your Canoe Country summer. By the way, there is an annual photo contest and maybe Steve's tips will you take that "once in a lifetime" photo.

Shore Lunch 110 Minutes

Your crew's caught some fish. Now, what the heck do you do with them? This session will teach you some lore, true

or not, on fishing, how to clean fish and different ways to cook them. Handling and releasing fish will also be discussed. You will actually prepare your own fish on stoves together with potatoes fried in a cast iron skillet. If you have a fillet knife, please bring it. This session is conducted by **Mike Holdgrafer**, SAA Director former Guides' Chief from the late 1970s and early 1980s.

One-Match Fire 50 Minutes

Cliff Jacobson presents a second seminar on the skills to properly build a fire that will start with one match; guaranteed. Stoves are handy and convenient, but nothing replaces the ambience of a fire in canoe country. Whether you crew cooks over a wood fire or simply wants a small campfire to enjoy the evening, Cliff shares forgotten skills on how to start a fire; such as using spruce sap as a firestarter. Don't miss an opportunity to learn a trick or two from Cliff.

Base History 50 Minutes

The Northern Tier program's been around since 1923 and a lot has happened since

Charles L. Sommers promoted the vision of youth heading into Canoe Country on trips. **Chuck Rose** shares his knowledge of the history of this program, some of it developed from his own research over the years, so that you can pass it on to your crews. Trust us, they will ask you about the program. Chuck's session will help you answer these questions and in the process you will learn what it means to be a "Charlie Guide."

Advanced Baking 110 Minutes

Your brigade leaders (Yes, that group of individuals who took you on your swamper trip and brought you back), will show you how you can embellish your crew's experience, and quite frankly, the core trail food you will be eating, by teaching you advanced baking tips. If you want to bake cinnamon rolls and other tasty baked goods, this is a hands' on opportunity to learn and fill your gut.

Night Sky 50 Minutes

Few places in the world offer you the opportunity to view the night sky without the

glare of man's lights like the North Country does. During your summer, you will see the northern lights, meteor showers and the Milky Way. **Mike Holdgrafer** explains some lore and the physics of the northern lights, while **Butch Diesslin** talks about what constellations and other celestial objects.

Advanced Navigation 50 Minutes

Steve Niedorf has developed a session which will help improve your navigation skills as you journey across the water. In his class, he provides skills and tips that will ensure that you will never be confused. Leave confusion to your crew and sit back and smile, comfortable in the secrets Steve has shared with you, and then pass them on to your crews!

Glaciation 30 Minutes

This short session addresses how lake country was formed about 20,000 years ago by the last glacier, together with some very basic geology. Learn about the "whaleback" rock on Base, how you can identify glacial activity on your trips and share this knowledge with your crews. **Mike Holdgrafer** will lead this session and arm you with information about how this area was developed.

Common Trail Repairs 30 Minutes

It never fails; somebody breaks or damages trail gear while you're on the water. Nothing can be worse than a broken tent zipper in mosquito-country at night. **Chris Bursch**, with over 50 years of Scouting experience, a canoeing consultant and Okpik winter camping volunteer, teaches you how to overcome equipment failures while on the water. Learn tent/tarp repairs and other basic repairs to get you back with minimal disruption. ■

The Tedium of Working on Lodge Windows

by Mike Holdgrafer and Dick Shank

For several years, the focus on the Lodge has been to restore the interior log surfaces. There was a quiet realization that at some point, work would shift to restoring the paned windows and doors. During the 2009 work week, which coincided with seasonal staff training, this exciting task was undertaken by volunteers.

There's not much to write about in this regard and the

photos are self-explanatory. Less than half of the windows were taken down, sanded, prepped and varnished. **Zane Beaton**, former SAA Director, was the master joiner, fixing and gluing bad joints (His daughter, **Erin**, worked in the Trading Post this past summer). **Rolland White** came up from Arkansas and pitched in, also helping with staff training. **Bill Erickson**, in a lull

before summer expeditions, stopped by to lend a hand. **Dick Shank** continued to oversee the operations.

That's it. We'll be doing the same in 2010 and need additional hands. There will be other projects in the Lodge and in another article we'll discuss news on the interpretative and museum side.

If you are interested in lending a helping hand next

June, please drop Dick or Mike an email at Richard.Shank@allina.com or mike.holdgrafer@dtag.com, respectively. Meals and lodging can be provided with adequate notice. **Butch Diesslin** will take us fishing one day and we'll have one evening when we go to the Ely Steakhouse. There's plenty of room, fellowship, opportunities and minnows. ■



Rolland White – Prep Work.



Zane Beaton – Master Joiner.



Bill Erickson – Sanding.



Dick Shank – More Sanding.



The Varnishing System.

2010 Alumni Work Week

by Dick Shank

Please join us for a North Woods break from your usual routine! The Alumni Work Week is slated for June 1 – June 10 at the Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base in Ely, coinciding with seasonal staff training for the Northern Tier staff. Join us for fellowship, work, and interaction with the new generation of seasonal staff.

Window frame refinishing and preparation is top of the list for this summer, along with preparation work for displays and high tech electronic features consistent with the anticipated museum and interpretive function of the Lodge. Prior expertise and experience are not required to participate in this excellent project!

Meals and accommodations on the base will be provided at no cost. As in the past, one day will be planned for fishing on Basswood with an evening dinner at the Ely Steakhouse for all volunteers. You may also want to participate in training week activities as your interest

permits. More importantly, it is an opportunity to meet and interact with current seasonal staff, as well as fellow alumni. **Bring your skills and/or enthusiasm; on the job training will be provided.** We can use help for a day or a week, so come as early and stay as late as you can! For more information, contact Dick Shank at richard.shank@allina.com, or call me at [REDACTED] or

contact any of the Sommers Alumni directors, contacts at www.Holry.org.

This is a great opportunity for alumni to reconnect with the Northern Tier program with a little “sweat equity.”

Consider combining some time at the base with some fishing and/or canoeing! The base will be glad to help outfit you if needed.

We hope to hear from you! ■

SAA Volunteers Provide Time and Talent

What a remarkable summer 2009 was when it came to SAA volunteers sharing their time and talent. In particular, we extend our appreciation to recognize three individuals who clearly earned a gray SAA shirt. **Bob Rench** spent considerable time at the Base repairing trail stoves. **Hayden (“Tink”) Groth** also spent considerable

time on Base doing a myriad of maintenance tasks, while his partner, **Owen Gibbs**, spent the entire summer helping to repair canoes. Rumor has it that Tink and Owen are conspiring to endow a scholarship. Stay tuned.... By the way, if anyone has photos of these three they would like to publish, please send them in! ■

You Can See the Magic Begin *cont'd.*

(continued from page 9)

untouched lakes or watching a fellow trekker eating two liters of food in one sitting. But, I think the magic is the entire trip. All the events strung together create an unbreakable tie to that place and time.

Philmont gives twenty thousand kids a year this gift of magic and it allows a thousand staff members the gift of making the magic happen. Philmont has given me the chance to grasp just a little bit of how my dad's entire life has been spent and a chance for me to be proud of him

Other members of PSA 726-2 were Kevin Dowling, Joe Mattson, Doug Latimer, Sharon Latimer and Alex Nepple, SAA trekkers, and Rick Touchette, Stephen Braunlich [advisor], Mark Furey, Reade Furey and Lee Huckstep, PSA trekkers. Kevin Dowling, father of Jacob and Casey, is the Northern Tier General Manager and Joe Mattson, father of Glenn, is the Northern Tier Associate Director of Program. ■

Upcoming Events

Friday, March 12 – Sunday, March 14

Canoeopia Paddlesport Expo (Madison, WI)
Stop by the Northern Tier booth in the outfitter section.

Saturday, August 28 to Friday, September 3

Alumni Wilderness Voyage (Ely, MN)

Friday, September 3 – Monday, September 5

Rendezvous Reunion (Ely, MN) Hol-Ry!

Winter 2011

Sea Base Alumni Sailing Adventure
(Florida Keys)

Summer 2011

Philmont Alumni Trek (Cimmaron, NM)

Visit www.Holry.org for further information.

LIFETIME GIVING

What? Tax Deduction and Tax Savings for you now. Permanent support for the SAA now and later.

How? Donate appreciated property where you have substantial gains such as stocks, real estate, art work, etc.

When? Anytime – as part of your estate planning or to reduce current taxes.

We will work with your attorney and tax advisor to make this an effective tax saving strategy for you and your estate.

Please contact SAA President Patrick Cox by phone @ [REDACTED]; by email at patrick.cox@coxcpa.net; or any SAA director or officer. The directors and officers with knowledge in this subject area donate their time. No fees are charged to the SAA for your donations.

www.holry[REDACTED].org

by Mike Holdgrafer

Have you heard about this website? If not, the next time you are browsing on the Internet, looking at YouTube videos or in Facebook, consider looking at this website. You may be pleasantly surprised as it contains photos and materials that document the history of the Canoe Base and its former staff and participants.

For many years, Allen Rench, SAA Director and past-President, has spent countless hours archiving and cataloging various collections before digitizing them to post on [REDACTED]. Although this remains a work-in-progress, Allen has done a fantastic job in transforming a part of our collective history into a website where each of us can enjoy the past.

Photos of crews from 1941, and 1960 to 1986, along with some other miscellaneous photos, are available for online viewing. In connection with reviewing a photo, a user can submit identifying information and/or submit comments about a photo. Allen has also loaded pictures of miniature paddle brands on the website.

In the 1930s and 1940s, individuals were eligible for the Order of the Silver Paddle Award. To receive the award, a

canoeist had to identify twenty-five plants and trees, and tell of their uses. Plus, the applicant had to submit three photos of their trip together with a trip diary. Sometimes, a map showing the crew's route was included with the application. Among alumni, we often talk about how, despite differences in generations, the canoe country we travel through remains constant. Looking at the photos and reading these trip diaries further evidences the common legacy in which we all share.

Allen has also assembled a myriad of other interesting documents, such as the 1939 Hand Book for Canoe Trip Guides printed by Carl S. Chase, and the invitation and other documents relating to the dedication of the "new" Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe base on May 17, 1942. A limited number of trek logs/journals of crews and Charlie Guides are also available online to read.

We sincerely appreciate Allen's dedication to a project that allows each of us to look back and reminisce. If you have some photos, memorabilia or trip journals you wish to share with other alumni, please consider contacting Allen. ■

Notes from the Portage Trail

Michael Hedrick, 68, of Scottsdale, Arizona passed away on April 26, 2009. The son of **George D. Hedrick**, Michael worked at the Base.

The passing of **Dick Lavine** was noted in the last Reflections. **Butch Diesslin** subsequently noted that Dick carved the name

of Charles L. Sommers into the fireplace mantle in the Lodge prior to the Base's dedication in May 1942.

Dave Hyink is the new Council President for the Black Hills Area Council, Rapid City, SD. ■



Greetings from the Northwoods!

The recycling program is up and running, and we have already received a tremendous amount of positive feedback from participants and staff. We here at the base would like to thank you for your support in helping make our vision a reality. We appreciate your continued involvement with the Northern Tier program.

Sincerely,
Jason Mellen &
Shelley Anklan

SAA Funds Recycling Initiative

by Mike Holdgrafer

This past May, then current Northern Tier staff and future SAA alumni **Shelley Anklan** and **Jason Mellen** looked around the Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base in Ely and decided that despite being in the wilderness of canoe country that it was not "green" enough when it came to recycling stations in and around the Base for crews to use. Shelley and Jason put together a proposal for the SAA to fund the purchase of recycling receptacles, which they presented to the SAA

Board of Directors for approval at its June 13, 2009 meeting. Both staff then implemented the program and also took the time to send the SAA a hand-crafted "Thank You" for our support of their initiative (please see accompanying photo). Kevin Dowling reported at the SAA Annual Meeting on September 12, 2009 that the recycling program was very successful. Migwetch to Shelley and Jason for finding a way to reduce the Base's footprint. ■

In the Next Issue



- An interview with Kevin Dowling
- Two SAA Directors featured in "Meet Your Directors and Officers"
- Crossing Portages
- An update on the new Dining Hall and Conference Center



Home Built Bodacious Curves

by Bryan Heusinkvelt (1986-88)

I saw one once, when I was an active Charlie Guide. She was beautiful, sleek and efficient while gliding effortlessly across the lake. I gazed from the shore of our campsite and contemplated the lines and curves of this grand creation, the likes of which I had never seen before. Gorgeous cedar shaped into a canoe!

A cedar strip canoe encased in a clear coating of fiberglass and epoxy is indeed beautiful. Not exactly traditional building techniques for a canoe, still it belongs in the wilderness. Those of you that had the privilege of guiding with a Seliga wood and canvas work of art were from an era I had only heard stories about. Some may even own one today, able to admire hand craftsmanship at its nautical finest every time you paddle. An old Charlie once poetically described the view from the stern looking down rows of spruce ribs and cedar planking of his Seliga. How I wanted to paddle a Seliga on a trip, taking notice of every advantage the all natural product had over the Grumman aluminum. I even talked to Joe Seliga once while in town on a day off. "Two years of waiting

and \$2000" he said as he worked in his shop shaping the ribs for his latest creation. I would have to keep dreaming.

Fast forward about twenty years. I saw a cedar strip kayak, actually three such boats, in one garage. A friend showed me his winter projects that had spilled over into spring and early summer. He told me the simplicity of constructing his kayaks, combining the natural beauty of cedar and the strength of fiberglass and epoxy built around plywood forms. He could not stop himself from building another and another, improving each design.

The gears in my head started turning. How could I build my own canoe, my own floating work of art? Of course there is never enough time to just build a boat. "Some day" I repeated in my mind for several years "I'll build a cedar strip canoe."

I have a pretty good life, good marriage, good kids, steady job... I knew I was ripe for a mid-life crisis as I approached 40. For a diversion from my routine life, I started looking at addictive pictures on the internet. Photos of those

bodacious curves and lines, front decks and sexy sterns from canoes others had built consumed my imagination. My wife knew there was trouble! Using all the persuasion I could gather over the course of a few months, I convinced her I NEEDED to build a canoe. She could see the growing desperation on my face. Her resistance gave way to concern for a desperate husband. She gave me a book with complete plans to build a (cedar) stripper. Building a canoe was cheaper than going to counseling! I began to gather the supplies, cedar lumber, plywood, fiberglass, epoxy and caning for the seats. She reluctantly conceded one of the cars being put out of the garage, where my "therapy" would take place.

About 6 months after cutting the first cedar boards into 3/4"x 1/4" strips, my creation was finished, my mental acuity restored, mid-life crisis circumvented. I thanked my wife for her understanding and headed to the local hole we call a lake. Life was great... although I saw a few things that would make this beauty even better. When I build the next one I'll... HOL-RY. ■

Pre-2010 Rendezvous Basswood Camping Opportunity

SAA member **Butch Diesslin** has a permit for Sunday, August 29, 2010 to enter the BWCAW at Moose Lake. Up to 8 alumni and family members are invited to join him on a different type of wilderness adventure the week prior to the 2010 Alumni Rendezvous. This wilderness camping opportunity will not involve rigorous portaging, long days of paddling or arduous backpacking or an endless diet of dehydrated foods. Butch's permit allows the party to use motorboats with outboard motors of 25 horsepower or less.

The general plan is for the group to leave from Moose lake on August 29 by boat, travel up the Moose lake chain to Prairie Portage, have the boats, gear and people hauled across the portage on a trailer by a Bronco. Once on Basswood Lake, the group will proceed north and west along the International Boundary and find a suitable campsite. The group will set up camp and most likely remain camped at that site for the duration of the trip. The members of the group can then visit numerous sites of personal interest and historical significance, stay at camp and enjoy nature, or to try and catch some Walleyes, Northern Pike, Smallmouth Bass, Crappie, or Sunfish.

The group will return to Moose Lake by Friday, September 3, in time to get cleaned up before supper and check-in for the Alumni Rendezvous. Check www.holry.org for further information.

Questions? Contact Butch at butchnlucy@frontiernet.net. ■

National Order of the Arrow Receives Forest Service Eastern Region 9 Award

On December 9, 2009, the Order of the Arrow received an Eastern Region 9 Honor Award from the U.S. Forest Service for the Wilderness Voyage High Adventure program contributing service to the Superior National Forest. The award is presented annually showcasing the outstanding accomplishments of dedicated employees, retirees, and private citizens. The award is presented in ten categories including: Natural Resources Leadership and Stewardship, Multicultural Organization, Volunteers National Program, Outstanding

Customer Service, and Safety and Occupational Health.

Based out of the Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base operated under the Northern Tier High Adventure Program near Ely, Minnesota, the Order of the Arrow's Wilderness 3 Voyage program contributes the equivalent of roughly \$150,000 in portage and trail work each year. The efforts of Arrowmen help maintain and preserve portage and hiking trails within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

During the OA Voyage pro-

gram, Arrowmen spend one week working on portage rehabilitation and one week traveling the Boundary Waters. Arrowmen receive instruction and practice wilderness skills such as Leave No Trace as well as learn history about the area. Since inception, more than 750 Arrowmen have participated in the OA Voyage program. From www.oe-bsa.org

Editor's Note: In 2003, the USFS recognized the OA with the Chief's Volunteer Award, which is the highest volunteer service award presented by the USFS. In addition, after a

decade of successfully helping to rebuild and restore portage trails in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, a pilot program called "Canadian Odyssey" was launched by the OA in the Quetico Provincial Park in 2009. In partnership with the Quetico Provincial Park, Canadian Odyssey will be fully operated this summer in the Quetico, offering Arrowmen a new wilderness opportunity. After one week of working on portage trails, crews will return to Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base on Moose Lake. ■

Sessions Surprises O'Hara

On March 28, 2009, a surprise recognition was held for Bob O'Hara at the Far North Symposium in St. Paul sponsored by the Minnesota Canoe Association. **Lee Sessions (1982-86)** of Portland, Oregon, together with other canoeing friends of Bob, led the effort to recognize Bob's fifty years of canoeing wild rivers and promoting northern paddling adventures.

Lee successfully pulled off the surprise. Bob was presented with a memory book filled with letters and photos from individuals and organizations that paid tribute to Bob, including the Northern Tier High Adventure Program, the Sommers Alumni Association, YMCA Camp Menogyn and others. He also was given a specially designed flag and a

commissioned caricature of himself. Several members of the SAA joined Lee for this special tribute, including **Chuck Rose, Allen Rench, Chris Clay, Dick Shank and Steve Niedorf.** Bob failed to pick-up on a telling clue that something was afoot; everyone was told to wear red at the symposium in recognition of Bob's "mandatory suggestion" that red is the preferred color for gear when in the arctic.

Bob has been a stalwart supporter of the Northern Tier and SAA, inspiring generations of young men and women to venture North. For more on Bob, Chris Niskanen of the St. Paul Pioneer published an article titled "The River Man" which can be found at www.mshsca.org/nordicski/riverman.pdf. ■



Bob O'Hara (third from left), joins (from left to right), SAA Members **Chuck Rose, Allen Rench, Chris Clay, Dick Shank, Steve Niedorf** and **Lee Sessions**.

Shane Johnson
2214 Deertrail LP, Rio Rancho, NM

Dear Charles L. Sommers
Alumni Association,

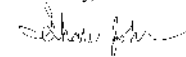
I would like to first thank every member and volunteer for acknowledging my hard work and dedication to the Northern Tier program and awarding me with a scholarship award in the amount of one thousand dollars.

This award money, which will be put to use in helping me pay all of my fall semester school bills, is a gift that will be a great help in paying for a great education that as you know is not cheap these days. I will continue to thrive and grow due to this great and wonderful gift that

the Alumni Association provides.

With four years on staff I have been able to experience a wonderful program, great people, and have made friends that will last a lifetime. Working at Northern Tier is something I will carry with me wherever I may go in life. All I ask is that the Alumni Association keeps up the great work and realizes what a great asset they are to the Northern Tier program in their support of the staff. Once again thank you from the bottom of my heart, and God bless.

Sincerely,

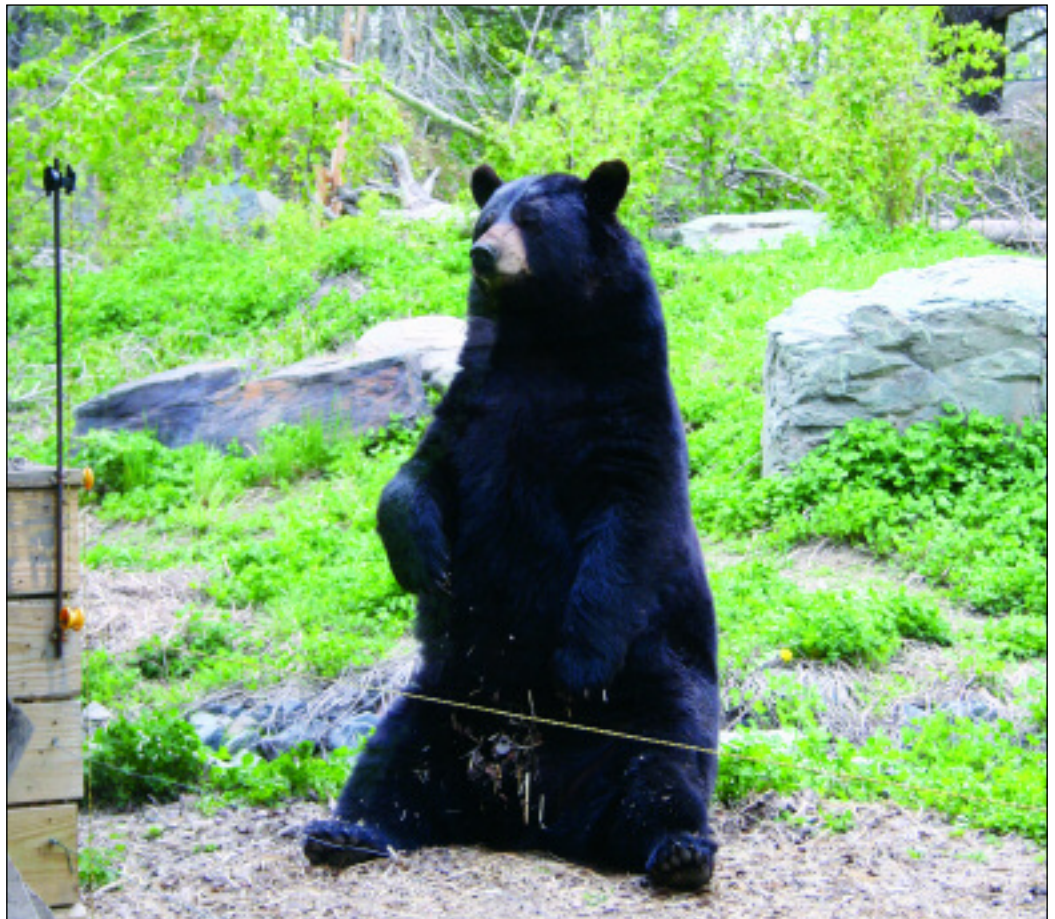

Shane M. Johnson

Not sure about the scholarship program the SAA supports? Please read a "Thank You" letter from a staff member received last year.

Please...

One of the primary objectives of *Reflections* is to connect our members throughout the world via articles, stories, anecdotes (true and otherwise), photos or other images published by our members. Bear in mind, each Director is required to publish an article annually. So, when we tally up articles from individuals other than the Directors, the Editor or, dare we say, regular contributors, it appears that materials from our membership may be a little threadbare.

The next time you are sitting around on your duff (like Ted, one of the resident bears at the North American Bear Center) with nothing to do, or you are standing around wondering when dinner will be ready (like the pack of wolves waiting for their once weekly, Saturday feeding at the International Wolf Center with a public program appropriately called "What's for Dinner?"), please spend an idle moment to put together an article or gather a photo we can publish. Maybe it is a recollection from your time at the Base, likely embellished, or something more current such a canoe trip with family or friends. Whatever it may be, we would like to patch that threadbare spot and see more articles from you, our members. ■



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