



Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc.

REFLECTIONS



Supporting the mission and programs of Northern Tier National High Adventure.

SPRING—SUMMER 2014 EDITION

Head “Up North” for the 2014 reunion rendezvous

By Karl Huemiller

August 22 - 24 alumni from all over the country will be coming together on Moose Lake for the 2014 Reunion Rendezvous where we will celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Northern Tier program and 20 years of support by the Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association. We will celebrate with activities on base and in Ely, a picnic in Whiteside Park, and a banquet at the Grand Ely Lodge. Our biennial banquet will feature event speaker **Kevin Callan “The Happy Camper.”** Youth attendees will have the opportunity to tour and sleepover at the world-renowned International Wolf Center.

I look forward to seeing old friends and meeting their families. Many of us have made big changes in our lives over the past few years, getting new jobs, having kids, or retiring. I am eager to hear about everyone's great life adventures, plans for the future, and sharing some of my own stories.

With all the exciting events planned for the coming reunion, we need some help to make the event the best that it can be. Volunteers are particularly needed to help out with a picnic in Whiteside Park and finding items for the banquet's auction. We will also need help

Register today!

When: Friday, August 22 – Sunday, August 24, 2014

Why: To reconnect with friends and make new friends, pass the paddle to the next generation of alumni – and have fun!

Register and learn more: <http://reunion.holry.org>

with registration check-in and setting up at the banquet. If you would like to help make the reunion a great event, contact Karl Huemiller at [REDACTED]

In an effort to keep the reunion affordable there is a low all-inclusive price. In addition, to encourage recent alumni to join us, more "experienced" alumni have the opportunity sponsor a "fellowship" so younger alumni can afford to attend. Young alumni can learn more about applying for a fellowship on the registration site.

I hope to see you and your family in Ely at the reunion. *It will be an event you will not want to miss.*

Visit <http://reunion.holry.org> to find out more and register.

Work Week: Join us for a north woods break from your usual routine!

By Dick Shank

This is your chance for to invest some sweat equity and enjoy camaraderie with your fellow alumni members and current staff, as well as to make your mark on this priceless asset, Northern Tier.

“Work Week” is May 29 to June 6. We can use help for a day or a week, so come as early and stay as late as you can! Bring your skills and enthusiasm; we will provide on-the-job training. The work will involve a variety of projects intended to preserve and enhance the Lodge as an interpretive center for the base, while continuing its use for programs. The completion of this

project is in sight.

Northern Tier will provide meals and accommodations at no cost. You will have the bonus of participating in training week activities as your interest and time permit. On or about June 4, we are planning a volunteer alumni dinner. June 5 will be Seminar Day, sponsored and staffed by your fellow alumni to provide additional education for trail staff in outdoor and guiding skills. If you've got an area of expertise you're willing to share, please contact us. Consider also contacting your fellow alumni to participate with you and make your own reunion part of the fun.

As in prior years, some of our alumni have worked a few days and then headed out on the trail. The base will be glad to help outfit you if needed. You must make advance arrangements with Northern Tier.

We hope to hear from you! For more information and to arrange to participate contact Dick Shank at [REDACTED]

Work Week: May 29 – June 6

- Contact Dick Shank in advance to arrange to participate in Work Week.
- Early sign-up is strongly encouraged to assist Northern Tier and your fellow alumni with planning.
- Be a member in good standing of the SAA. Join online at <http://www.holry.org/>

Young at heart – a SAA volunteer Interpreter

By Eric Peterson

The rain was coming down in torrents, thunder and lightning all around us. We had just gotten off McIntyre Lake and were preparing to portage onto McIntyre Creek, en route to our planned campsite on Robinson Lake. Only a few moments earlier, we had encountered a group coming off the portage when we heard the familiar hail of 'Holry!' followed by "Who's your interpreter?." I walked over and responded with a hearty 'Redeye'. The paddler who had called out stated that he was a former interpreter, and it turned out to be Alex Nepple, who was on a trip with family. I had known Alex thru the SAA, along with alumni voyages at the Florida Sea Base and Northern Tier. We chatted for a bit, and I discovered that ironically it was Alex himself that sent out an email a couple months ago that initiated a chain of events leading to our encounter. For I was now a Volunteer Interpreter, an SAA alumnus who answered the call from Northern Tier, to help with a surge of crews that had been scheduled to arrive from mid to late June.

The morning of May 21, 2013 revealed an SAA e-news message. I opened it up and read an interesting post, clicked the link, read thru it once and then read it again. "How young at heart are you? Find out this June!" I paged my calendar over to June, reviewed my vacation balance and thought that just maybe I could make this work. After getting clearance from the home front and work, I called Davey Warner at Northern Tier. We settled on the crew dates, arrival date, and started the paperwork process, which was pretty much the same as for any staff member.

I had arrived at Northern Tier a couple days before my crew. Having been up there numerous times over the years, the changes to the base since the 80's were quite familiar. The next morning, I shadowed an interpreter whose crew arrived that day, following along to get the hang of the current processes and procedures.

My crew assignment was delivered at breakfast on June 22, Crew E062213G. I knew I had a Quetico trip, having worked with Davey to get my RABP prior to my arrival. After breakfast, those of us with arriving crews packed up our food for the trip in the Commissary. We then went to the Baypost to get our gear sorted out and stashed for our crew. After lunch, it was up to the arrival area to await our crews. My crew was the second or third to arrive that afternoon and consisted of four scouts and two advisors from Bradenton, Florida, Troop 125. After getting settled in, the crew chief, advisors, and crew members and I reviewed the required paperwork and commenced on our arrival activities. This included a Voyager demonstration at the lodge (including mulling over possible routes on the map in the lodge while waiting for the prior crew to finish),

acquiring and checking out our gear at the Baypost, then inspecting our food and loading into the food packs.

After a great dinner prepared by the kitchen staff, we went upstairs for the standard Quetico orientation video (during which my thoughts drifted back to watching the 16mm Voyager film in the old dining hall). We finalized our route and headed back to the cabin for a shakedown. I was pleased that my crew embraced the idea of packing light and minimal, and left them to wrap up and settle in for the night. I meandered down to the staff lounge, reviewed our itinerary with the guide chief, procured a copy of the fabulous "Charlie's Guide" and hung out with the staff for a while before heading back to my bunk for the night.

"They are the timeless experiences that echo thru our minds, and call us back again and again."

Bright and early the next morning we were up and at it. There were six crews going out that day and fifteen coming off the water. Following a hearty breakfast we headed down to the canoe yard to get our boats. After gathering our paddles, gear and food, we portaged down to the landing, loaded up the canoes and headed out. Our first portages were a bit tough for the crew. The scouts were 13 and 14 year olds, and the heavy food packs, Grey Whales, and Aluminum canoes tested their mettle. The kettle pack straps were as tight as they could be and still the hip belt slipped down the legs of John, our smallest scout. We had a Sarah Lake entry, and went thru a number of challenging portages on the way that the scouts conquered with fortitude and determination. Our crew endured and after a layover on Sarah to rest and recuperate, made some route adjustments that ensured a great experience for all.

From here on out, our voyage was not much different from that of crews from the past. Our equipment and food may have differed over time, however, many things remain the same: The thrill of catching fish, watching the sunset across the lake, seeing the mist rising off the water in the morning, hearing the rain pattering on our tents, digging in our paddles as we buck the waves and wind, listening the call of the loon, and hearing the pop and crackle of the fire as we stare into the cheerful flames. They are the timeless experiences that echo thru our minds, and call us back again and again.

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After our arrival back at base and completing all the standard check in procedures we participated in the evening Rendezvous with the staff. We thoroughly enjoyed donning the regalia of a voyageur, singing songs and celebrating the conclusion of the voyages for all the crews present. The program concluded with the staff gathering together to sing the familiar words and tune of The Far Northland.

I was impressed how the full time staff welcomed us volunteers as one of their own. It highlights the character of the Northern Tier staff. Although we may be from different locales, backgrounds, experiences, and generations we are all bound together by our desire to experience the Far Northland. More importantly, is the

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desire to introduce our nation's youth to that experience and instill in them the confidence, appreciation and desire to return, and eventually pass it on to yet another generation of voyagers.

Volunteer Interpreters welcome

By Davey Warner

Last summer, several energetic and generous members of the SAA had a great time serving as Volunteer Interpreters at Northern Tier. We invite any former Interpreters who are current members of the SAA to apply for this opportunity again. Dates are flexible, but our need is greatest in the month of July.

Those interested should: 1) Complete the Seasonal Employment Application found online at <http://bit.ly/SAAInterpreter> . On the application, please indicate “Volunteer Interpreter” as your first choice and indicate the dates that you are available. 2) Have three people submit reference forms on your behalf.

3) Submit the application and reference forms via fax (218.365.3112) or by mail (PO Box 509, Ely, MN 55731) to the attention of Davey Warner.

Those who are accepted will have to meet some minimum requirements. This includes a BSA Health and Medical Record completed by a physician and current certification in BSA Youth Protection, Safety Afloat, Safe Swim Defense, Weather Hazards, CPR, and Wilderness First Aid.

If you have any questions, please contact Davey Warner at [REDACTED] or by phone at 218.365.4811, extension 113.

President's stern

By Chuck Rose

In 1983, I was in the Dining Hall admiring the gold-bordered 60th anniversary participant patch when a thought occurred to me: I'll probably be around for the 100th anniversary. Nine years later, the Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association (SAA) was formed. That plus the ongoing growth of the Northern Tier program ensure that (God willing) I will be around in 2023. It is now only nine years until the 100th anniversary.

As newly appointed president, I try to think about the short- and long-term benefits and ramifications of the SAA's existing programs, as well as new initiatives. I believe it's appropriate to use the upcoming centennial of the program as a visioning point. What will the association look like in 2023? What will the Northern Tier's summer and winter programs look like? Will we have reunions at the Canadian properties by or before then? How will our association's awards be different? Will we have more regional get-togethers as some alum have organized in the past? I believe we will have more members and more truly engaged members. Some old ideas and some new will be tried out in the next nine years.

One of our past projects for the 75th anniversary was the publication of *A Diamond in the North: A History of Scout Adventure in the North Country*.

I envision a new version of that history being published, but also including many other resources. Some of these are already available: check out the base's historic films from 1950, 1969, and 1981 on YouTube as examples (<http://bit.ly/SAAYoutube>). What else will we do to spread the spirit of the Far Northland throughout Scouting?

Let's create that vision together. Please talk to your buddies about your passions and ideas. Talk to directors (whose experiences span the decades since the '50s), and talk to me. Call or text me [REDACTED], post on my Facebook page [REDACTED] (that sunset is from Minn Lake, thanks for asking) or email me at [REDACTED]

Dollars & Cents

Financial and other governance documents for the Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc. are available to members in good standing at <http://portal.holry.org/members/Governance>



Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc.
PO Box 428
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(Address Label)

Calendar of events

Alumni Work Week – Northern Tier
May 29 – June 6, 2014

Alumni Wilderness Trek – Philmont Scout Ranch
July 14 – 21, 2014

Alumni Reunion Rendezvous – Northern Tier
August 22 – 24, 2014
Register at <http://reunion.holry.org>

Annual Meeting of the Members – Northern Tier
August 23, 2014, 8:30 a.m.

Canoeecopia 2015 – Madison, Wisconsin
March 13 –15, 2015
Volunteer to help promote Northern Tier by staffing the booth

Alumni Wilderness Voyage into the Boundary Waters – Northern Tier
Summer 2015

For further information see the website:
<http://www.holry.org>



“Welcome to my home!” by Nora Crist (2013 staff)



Interested in helping create Reflections or contributing an article for consideration? Email us at reflections@holry.org. Contributions for the Autumn–Winter issue are due by August 31st.