



Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc.

# REFLECTIONS



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

SPRING 2016 EDITION

## 2016 Reunion Rendezvous

*An invitation from Karl Huemiller*

I turned 31 this year, which moves me from being thirty to being in my thirties. I say this not because I feel old, I feel the same as always, but because it marks a mile stone in my life. As I mark this milestone I pause to reflect on where I am and the path that brought me here. On my path I have had a great many experiences both good and bad. Through these experiences there has been a common thread that both started me on my journey and continues to help me along my path, the Base. The Base gave me leadership experience, sales experience, and public speaking skills. But most of all, the Base has given me strong friendships. Friends where, although we live great distances from one another, when we sit down for beers we can easily pick up where we left off.

Friendships from the Base are the reason I am excited about the upcoming 2016 Reunion Rendezvous from August 26th to 28th. As I look back at the 2014 reunion I remember the singalong on Friday night, the picnic in the park, hanging out in town and the banquet Saturday night. I remember how great it was to see everyone, catch up and share quality time together. I know life can be busy. With kids and work it can be tough to make the trek up north, but as we establish ourselves, it becomes even more important to stay connected to the experiences that helped to shape our lives and share them with our loved ones.

For this reason we are working to make the reunion affordable for everyone with a low all-inclusive price. Some of the older alumni have offered to sponsor young alumni for cost of the reunion through a reunion

### Register today!

**When:** Friday, August 26 – Sunday, August 28, 2016

**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>

scholarship program, on a first come first serve basis.

On Friday, after picking up out-of-towners from the airport we will road trip up to Ely in time for dinner at the brand new Sandy Bridges Program Center and a bonfire afterwards. Saturday will start with the traditional annual meeting followed by a myriad of north-woods activities on base. For lunch we will load up in the parking lot to head into town for a cook out in the park and an afternoon of activities around town. In town we will have an evening banquet which will consist of an auction, keynote speaker and dinner. After a night on the town in Ely we will regroup in the morning to say our good-byes and head back home.

The 2016 SAA Rendezvous Reunion is shaping up to be an event you don't want to miss. Visit [holry.org](http://holry.org) to register and find out more about the 2016 reunion. If you want to scratch your north woods bug bite before the reunion in 2016 contact me at

[REDACTED] - Karl

*P.S. If you know someone who should come to the reunion, give them a call for me.*

## 2015 Crossing Portages donors

Thank you to the following donors who allow us to maintain our support activities and communicate with our members.

Nick Amann, Lawrence Ash, Arthur Aufderheide, Doug Bender, Arthur Braden, John Breen, Odin Christensen, Roger Clapp, Michael Clayburn, Jim Cole, Bryan Craft, R. A. Dadisman, Roger Dellinger, Butch Diesslin, Dan Dineen, Jack Fenoglio, Owen Gibbs, James Goodwin, Daniel Guild, Dallas Hill, Robert Hingst, Doug Hirdler, Mike Holdgrafer, Paul Holte, Jim Hood, Tim Huemiller, Karl Huemiller, David Hyink, Mark Kelly, Bob Kohns, Greg Kvam, Don Lee, Scott McCommons,

Michael McMahon, Don Melander, Dan Miller, Robert Morgan, Dave Nachtsheim, Alex Nepple, Steven Niedorf, Bill Noble, Richard Olson, Craig Pendergraft, Alan Person, Eric Peterson, Jay Poole, Robert Rasmussen, Dean Rau, Lynn Reeve, Jason Reis, Paul Reitemeier, Chuck Rose, Robert Rosene, J. Pat Ross, Louis Sabatini, Dale Schroeder, Lee Sessions, Richard Seume, Thomas Taylor, John Teat, Donnie Tegeler, Jim Varcho, Peter Vial, Brian & Liz Vollmer-Buhl, James Wedge, James Winchester, Dennis Wogaman, and Jim Zeszutek.



## Lodge renovation project

By Bill Erickson

The Lodge project was started in 2004 and was initiated and spearheaded by Mike Holdgrafer. The initial work consisted of cleaning and refinishing all the interior walls, ceilings and windows. Subsequently, the exterior work started and included replacement of rotten logs and log ends, sandblasting and sealing. The final phase consists of developing of a world-class interpretive center that depicts the history of the Lodge, Northern Tier and the area canoed by NT crews in a manner that will continue to allow the Lodge to be used by the staff and attendees. Much of this work was made possible by a very generous donation by Jim Sowell.

Split Rock Studios, Arden Hills, MN, (<http://www.splitrockstudios.com>) was contracted to design and construct the interpretive center. Split Rock has an outstanding record for such projects including Tettegouche State Park, Silver Bay, MN, Ford's Theater, Washington, DC, Poarch Band of Creek Indians Museum, Atmore, AL, and Carlsbad Caverns National Monument, Carlsbad, NM.

Conceptual sketch of Lodge Project by Split Rock Studios

Focus groups and review meetings were conducted by Split Rock Studios. Based on our input, they established the exhibit and design goals and are working on the detailed design with associated research to ensure historical accuracy. Areas will be devoted to Fur Trade Post (will be designed so base History staff can use this area when meeting with Scouts upon their arrival); First Nations; Logging, Mining and Early Tourism; Okpik; Base History; Fishing; Natural History and Trip Planning. A dry aquarium showing fish common to the area is planned. Interactive displays include lifting a 90-pound voyageur pack, using a two-man cross cut saw, route planning with lighted points-of-interest on a BWCAW/Quetico map, and an audio/visual kiosk.

And yes, there is a bright light at the end of the tunnel for this project. The current schedule calls for completion in time for the 2016 Reunion!

## From the President's canoe

By Chuck Rose

My first (sort of) alumni reunion took place my first week working at Ely in 1980. Bryan Craft was in charge of my work group and we were working down at the waterfront. A passing canoe pulled over for a visit. They said they had guided about a decade before and were coming in from a week-long trip. It was a brief but memorable (for me) visit. My first "formal reunion" was the days around New Year's Day 1982 when summer staff were invited to experience Minnesota winter. The Texans especially were impressed by being able to walk on Moose Lake. The day I left the Base in 1985 to start my teaching career, Gene Felton and other alumni were arriving for what became one of the genesis of the SAA

Rendezvous'. I've had "reunions" with alums at my home, the Minnesota State Fair, Prairie Portage, the ski slopes of Colorado, Canoecopia, and on Hegman Lake (even at Philmont). Hmm, I guess I consider a reunion to be wherever two or more of us gather. The highest number I remember was 175 at the 1998 Rendezvous celebrating the 75th anniversary of the program. I'd bet the SAA will beat that record in 2023 if not sooner.

Despite the fact that Facebook can keep us up to date on the lives of our Northern Tier family, these face to face meetings are something special. My favorite reunion—large or small—is always the next one. See you in August.



## Ely Folk School

By Jim Barott

There are some new and exciting things happening around Ely these days, one being the new Ely Folk School, which opened in June, 2015. The Folk School is located at the old Fisherman's Headquarters building, across the street from the Ely Steakhouse. I wanted to write this article in the hope there might be Alumni interested in teaching a class or being a participant. Visiting the Folk School would be another good excuse to come to Ely (like we need an excuse).

Two alumni (that I am aware of) have already taught at the Folk School, Erik Simula (1983, '84) and Bert Hyde (1965-69). Erik has taught two interesting classes, one about traditional birch bark canoe building and the other on Finnish Saunas. This summer there are tentative plans to have a public, ongoing birch bark canoe demonstration taught by Erik. Bert and his wife have taught canoeing skills and wilderness first aid at the Folk School. It is heartening to see Erik and Bert using skills developed at the Base to continue to benefit others. As for myself, I participated in an herbalist class and have been helping out with folk dances. In the future I am considering teaching a soils or a plant



Photo courtesy Arrowhead Journey

identification class.

The mission of the Ely Folk School is to "build community by providing learning experiences that celebrate the wilderness heritage, art, history, culture and craft of the people of northern Minnesota". Other examples of classes that have been taught are portage pack making, fire building, carving stone and wood, and fly tying. Obviously some of the classes, such as canoe skills, are taught off site due to nature of the class. Instructors don't need to have any formal training to teach a class and as guides / interpreters, we already had experience teaching while at the Base. Off the top of my head I can come up with alumni who have some great skills that would fit in with the Ely Folk School mission and are good teachers to boot. All

you need to do is fill out a proposal sheet explaining your idea and what your background is. The Ely Folk School will review your concept and get back to you. The Folk School complements Ely and the surrounding area, including the Base. I encourage you all to check it out.

New classes and events are being added to the website regularly, visit <http://www.elyfolkschool.org> for an up to date listing. You can call the coordinator, Jaime Brennan, if you have questions at (218) 235-0138.

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## Alumni work week: May 26 - June 7

May 26th through June 7th, this is your chance for some sweat equity and camaraderie with your fellow alumni members and current staff, and also benefit Northern Tier programs and facilities. We can use help for a day or a week, so come as early and stay as late as you can! Meals and accommodations on the base will be provided at no cost. The work will involve a variety of projects on the Base, including some work on the Welcome Cabin and bunkhouses.

You will have the added opportunity to participate in training week activities and Seminar Day on June 7. Seminar Day is sponsored and staffed by fellow alumni

to provide additional education for trail staff in outdoor and guiding skills. If you have an area of expertise you are willing to share, please contact us. A volunteer alumni dinner is planned for June 6.

You also have the option of heading out on the trail after a few days work (advance arrangements with Northern Tier are required if using base equipment or leaving from the NT landing).

We hope to hear from you! For more information about participating visit <http://bit.ly/WorkWeek2016>. Contact Dick Shank at [REDACTED]

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## Okpik staff recognition

For decades, the SAA has provided benefits to seasonal staff to encourage staff retention; examples include second-year paddles and third-year personalized guide packs. Many (but not all) staff who work during the summer also help staff the Okpik winter programs.

The directors of the SAA have now put together a separate incentive program for the winter staff. Similar to the summer program, first-year winter staff now receive a \$35 credit at the Northern Tier trading post so they can better equip themselves as needed. Second-year Okpik staff receive a neck warmer, with the SAA

"twilight paddlers" logo on it, and leather chaps (particularly useful around sled dogs). For their third year, staff receive a steel thermos with the SAA logo. For fourth-year staff, those hardy individuals receive a high-quality headlamp for use during the long nights. As with the summer program, the staff member must fulfill their seasonal contract to be eligible for the program.

These gifts not only provide tools for the staff to do their jobs for the Scouts but also serve as reminders to join the Alumni Association when they are able and give back to the program in the future.



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

### Calendar of events

**Alumni Work Week – Northern Tier**  
May 26 – June 7, 2016

**Reunion Rendezvous – Northern Tier**  
August 26 – 28, 2016

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

#### **SAA Officers**

*President:* Chuck Rose, [REDACTED]

*Vice President:* Owen Gibbs, [REDACTED]

*Corporate Secretary:* Cory Kolodji,

*Treasurer:* Eric Johnson,

#### **Reflections Newsletter**

*Editorial Staff:* Bill Erickson, [REDACTED]

*Technical Advisor:* Alex Nepple

*Advisor:* Chuck Rose

### Reunion Rendezvous ‘at a glance’

**Northern Tier's Charles L. Sommers Wilderness  
Canoe Base**

Friday, August 26 – Sunday, August 28

#### **Friday evening**

- Dinner at the Sandy Bridges Program Center
- Bonfire

#### **Saturday morning**

- Annual meeting of members
- North woods activities on the Base

#### **Saturday afternoon**

- Lunch at park in Ely
- Enjoy the town

#### **Saturday evening**

- Banquet with auction and guest speaker

#### **Sunday morning**

- Pack-up, say good-byes and head home

For further information, see the website at  
<http://reunion.holry.org>