



Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc.

REFLECTIONS



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

WINTER 2013/2014 EDITION

Mark Your Calendar and Register Today for the Reunion

By Karl Huemiller

A couple of months ago I got home after a rough day at work and settled down into my Lazy Boy to drink some of my wonderful home-brew when the phone rang. Much to my surprise it was Charles Evangelisti. Now if you don't know Charles, he is a 6'3", 230-pound mountain of muscle who pulled a 300lb food pack out of our canoe with his pinky while being thrashed by ten-foot waves. You can imagine how excited I was to learn he would be in town.

While drinking with Charles I realized what an impact Northern Tier has had on our lives. This is one of the reasons I volunteered to lead the upcoming Reunion Rendezvous from August 22-24th. I want the reunion to be a familiar place where I can meet with my friends, learn what they are doing, and hear where they are heading.

On Friday we will have dinner at the Sandy Bridges Program Center and bonfire afterwards. The following morning will start with the traditional annual meeting and a myriad of north-woods activities. For lunch we will

head into town for a cookout in Whiteside Park and an afternoon of activities around town. In the evening we will gather at the Grand Ely Lodge for our biennial banquet. The banquet will include dinner, keynote speaker, and auction benefiting the staff scholarship program. After a great night we will regroup on Sunday morning for breakfast to say our good-byes and head home.

Many of us are working on our families and careers, so finances can often be tight. We are working to make the reunion affordable with 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 may afford to attend.

The Reunion Rendezvous is shaping up to become an event you don't want to miss. It will give us the opportunity to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association and 90th anniversary of the Northern Tier program. **Visit <http://reunion.holry.org> to find out more and register.**

Seasonal Staff Scholarships and New Endowed Scholarship

This year's staff was smaller in size due to many Scouts attending the Boy Scouts of America's National Scout Jamboree at the inaugural of its new permanent location in West Virginia. While the staff was smaller, it was a far more experienced staff with over half of past staff returning. The quality of this year's seasonal staff was evident in that twenty-seven seasonal staff members were awarded an academic scholarship in recognition of their academic competence and exemplary ongoing service to youth.

The Seasonal Staff Scholarship program was the vision of long-time Northern Tier Director Clyde "Sandy" Bridges, he recognized that having staff serve more than one season was essential to improving and maintaining the quality of the wilderness experience of the youth participants. The program was implemented in the fall of 1998 with the purpose to encourage retention of seasonal staff, season over season, with the understanding that experienced staff enhance the program for participants and share their own experiences with younger staff. Funding of the scholarship program comes from several sources including endowment investment income, Triple Crown award program, and donations by SAA Alumni and

friends.

New Endowed Scholarship: Friends of Tinnerman / Tinnerman Guide Association Scholarship. The Friends of Tinnerman/Tinnerman Guide Association ("FOT/TGA") has generously endowed a new seasonal staff scholarship. The FOT/TGA was founded to support Greater Cleveland Council's Tinnerman Canoe Base. The program was founded in 1963, with their canoe base located on the French River in Ontario, Canada. Due to declining attendance and increased government regulations the council ceased operating the program after the summer of 2010. Crews signed up for the 2011 season instead participated in the Northern Tier program.

The scholarship memorializes the experiences, friendships, and memories of those who called Tinnerman Canoe Base their second home. In awarding the scholarship priority is given to a seasonal staff member from the Greater Cleveland Council. If there is no qualified applicant it will be awarded to a staff member from Ohio. If no applicant is from Greater Cleveland Council or Ohio, it will be awarded to a qualified applicant who has shown exemplary service to youth. *(Continued, see Page 4.)*



Photo by Joe Mingrone

The SAA Staff Photo Contest... 7 Years Later

By Steve Niedorf

I've been happily involved in organizing and judging the SAA's staff photo contest for the last seven years. None of it would have happened without the back office work of Alex Nepple, pulling the strings and making the web stuff work. Of course with the Boundary Waters and Canadian wilderness being subject matters I've seen lots of amazing images of sunsets and skies. As I'm still taking yearly trips into the woods I love taking my share of those pictures.

That said, I've also noticed a trend towards a somewhat different take on wilderness photography. As a professional photographer I've enjoyed seeing these variations. This year's contest finalists are examples of seeing and shooting things a little differently.

Jessica Evans' black and white portrait of a frosty face is a wonderful image. Of course it's funny, but also very graphic and the eyes are compelling and draw you



Photo by Jessica Evans

in. It was a good call to go to black and white; how colorful can a winter image be? Also keeping it simple with a tight crop is a good way to get your visual point across.

I thought Brent Meixell's lake level point of view on paddling in the rain was a

great take on the classic in-motion shot. The first words that come to mind are cold and wet and the fact that the color shift went blue helped that vibe. In addition, just taking the camera out in that kind of weather shows an "I must get that shot attitude". Also interesting to me was the fact that the crop was wide, it

was all about the rain and that someone was crazy enough to be paddling in that weather.

Joe Mingrone's in-action portage image was really just about perfect. The close-up wide angle view makes you feel right in the action, the sun rays through the mists, fast water in the background and heavily loaded folks hauling the packs behind the canoe are just right. I also loved the translucent blue water bottle as some spot color. If you were to come up with an image that says: portage... this would be it.

All this goes to show that the best images, the ones that move and inspire, always have some emotional investment in their creation, Jess got cold, Brent got wet, Joe ran ahead of his friends on the trail and captured a unique moment in time. They all worked it, took it a bit farther, and it shows.

It's important to remember this does not mean that images of rainy days or frosty faces will win awards, what does make images stand out is looking at things that we see all the time and rendering them in a way that we've never seen before and in a way that makes us laugh, or cry, or simply marvel at their beauty. *Thanks to all the folks that entered, hope to see your images next year!*

(Editor's note: See all of this year's staff photo contest entries at <http://bit.ly/SAAPhoto2013>)



Photo by Brent Meixell

Unusual Events on the 2012 Canoe Voyage

By Lee Huckstep

Unusual events – encounters with wolves, being checked by a Canadian game warden, being intercepted by the US Border Patrol, and perfect weather – were hallmarks of the fourth Canoe Voyage August 22 to 31, 2012, sponsored by the Exchange Program of the Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Philmont Staff Association, and Sea Base Alumni & Friends Association.



Alumni from Northern Tier and Philmont pose for a group photo prior to their voyage.

In addition to the unusual events, the Voyage itinerary is noteworthy: the Voyageurs paddled from Atikokan, Ontario, the location of the Northern Tier's Donald L. Rogert Base to Ely, MN, the location of the Northern Tier's Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base. This route is about 90 miles and is mostly in the Quetico Provincial Park of Ontario; only the last few miles are in the Boundary Waters of the United States.

The Ely-Atikokan route is not often paddled because of the logistical difficulties in shuttling people from Ely to Atikokan. These difficulties were resolved by the Northern Tier staff providing shuttle service to the Voyageurs at no cost.

As for the unusual events, Crew 2 sighted wild timber wolves on two separate occasions. While the Quetico has numerous wolves, they are normally heard – at night, howling from a distance – and seldom seen. For Crew 2 Voyageurs, this was the highlight of their

Voyage. They also encountered a moose in the wild.

Crew 2 was also treated to a rare visit by a Quetico Park game warden and “canoe technician” (The guy who paddles the game warden through the park.) The Quetico game wardens are seldom seen. However, on a late afternoon on Lake Agnes, the Quetico game warden and canoe technician entered the crew's campsite, inspected fishing licenses, got assurances that barbed hooks were being crimped (barbless hooks are required in the Quetico), gave a little fishing advice and then left.

Crew 1 was not to be left out of the unusual events: between the US border and the Sommers base – not known as a hotbed of illegal immigration – Crew 2 was stopped by a US Forest Service boat carrying US Border Patrol agents. The Voyageurs were required to produce their passports, which required emptying packs in a canoe in the middle of a lake. The Voyageur's passport numbers were collected, to be reported to passport control in Ely. Any Voyageurs who did not later check-in at passport control in Ely have likely been arrested by now.

Crew 1 did well in the fishing department. Late August fishing is normally slow, but they did well enough to supplement three evening meals with smallmouth bass and northern pike. Crew 1 also did well in the baking department: they enjoyed cinnamon rolls, brownies and cornbread.



Both crews experienced the best weather in the history of the exchange program. Canoeing conditions were idyllic. Mike Lewis, Crew 1, stated that “the most enjoyable part of the Voyage was the beauty of the remote wilderness and that, even though this experience was challenging, it was worth the time and physical effort to make it a success.”

Crew 1 participants were Kimberly Bielawski, Bryan Craft, Daniel Hippe, Adam Lewis, Michael Lewis, Randy Saunders and Charlie Saunders. Their interpreter was Brian Bittner.

Crew 2 participants were Alex Nepple, Rick Touchette, Doug Latimer, Lee Huckstep, Randy Howerton, Al and Mary Person. Their Interpreter was Colin Taylor. The next Canoe Voyage will be in 2015.



Voyageurs taking a refreshing dip into Louisa Falls.



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(Address Label)

2013 Seasonal Staff Scholarship Recipients

Lilja Amundson, Golden Valley MN; **Christian Bayens**, Auburn AL; **Bryan Christensen**, New Ulm MN (*Clifford J. Hanson Memorial Scholarship*); **Nora Crist**, Arden Hills MN; **Mark Dery**, Riverside CA; **Mark Dierauer**, Minnetonka MN; **Nathaniel Engvall**, Upton MA; **Andrew Hamline**, Kansas City MO; **Ethan Hardy**, Sterling Heights MI; **Evan Hardy**, Sterling Heights MI (*Terry J. Wall Charles Sommers Scholarship*); **Katie Hessenius**, Freeport IL; **Zachary Jankowski**, South Milwaukee WI; **Tyler Knight**, Bainbridge Island WA; **David Koponen**, Livonia MI; **Garrett Marcus**, Underwood MN; **Brent Meixell**, Kingwood TX (*David Hyink Scholarship*); **Bradley Parker**, Santa Clara CA; **Scott Pate**, Osceola IA (*Christopher D. Breen Memorial Scholarship*); **Gunnar Raasch**, Milwaukee WI; **Matthew Ruffing**, West Mifflin PA (*Friends of Tinnerman / Tinnerman Guide Association Scholarship*); **Benjamin Rutherford**, Missoula MT; **Trevor Santy**, Parker CO; **Zoe Senecal**, Brooklyn NY (*Butch Diesslin Scholarship*); **Ann Shipley**, Saint Louis MO; **Lucas Wade**, Old Orchard Beach ME; **Kyle Yarusso**, Lake Elmo MN (*Erickson Memorial Scholarship*); **Aaron Zupan**, Delafield WI

Calendar of Events

Canoecopia 2014 – Madison, Wisconsin.
March 7-9, 2014.
Volunteer to help promote Northern Tier.

Alumni Work Week & Seminar Day – Northern Tier.
Early June 2014.

Alumni Wilderness Trek at Philmont Scout Ranch – Cimarron, New Mexico.
July 14-21, 2014.

Alumni Reunion Rendezvous – Northern Tier.
August 22-24, 2014.
Registration is now open!

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

Interested in helping create Reflections or contributing an article for consideration? Email us at reflections@holry.org. Contributions for the spring issue are due by January 19th.