



SOMMERS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

REFLECTIONS



NORTHERN TIER NATIONAL HIGH ADVENTURE



Hol-Ry!

The Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc. invites you to join. Our activities aim to get scouts involved at the program bases of the Northern Tier National High Adventure programs. We also support those programs. Some of our objectives: (1) preserve and promote wilderness camping, high adventure and training opportunities for the Northern Tier National High Adventure Programs, (2) bring relevant needs and suggest programs to the Northern Tier High Adventure Committee, (3) off the time, talents and assets of the corporation's membership to the programs bases of the Northern Tier High Adventure Programs and to the local Councils of the Boy Scouts of America, and (4) spread the spirit of "the Far Northland" through Scouting.

Active membership is open to: (1) all persons who have served on the seasonal or permanent staff of any Northern Tier High Adventure Program, including the Charles

L. Sommers National High Adventure Base, Donald G. Rogert National High Adventure Base, Northern Expeditions, Northern Wisconsin National High Adventure Base, and the Maine National High Adventure Base, and (2) all

current and former members of the Northern Tier National High Adventure Committee.

Affiliate membership is open to: (1) all former adult crew advisors for any Northern Tier National High Adventure Program, and (2) any adult (18 and older) who wishes to

maintain a significant, active interest in the mission and success of the Northern Tier National High Adventure Programs. Affiliate members have all the rights of membership except the right to vote and hold office.

Annual dues for regular membership are \$10 for active and affiliate members, and \$25 for sustaining membership. Dues for current staff are \$5, and Life Memberships are a one-time payment of \$150 (\$100 for current staff).

The Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc. was incorporated in 1992 as a non-profit corporation, and is a U.S. IRS 501 (c) (3) corporation. Donations are tax-deductible. The association holds an Annual Meeting of the Members, publishes periodic newsletters, and holds reunions. Please complete the membership information sheet today, indicate the type and level of membership you would like. We look forward to hearing from you and having you join our ranks. Visit us on the web at www.holry.org.

Up North

Up North is a certain way the wind feels on your face and the way an old wool shirt feels on your back. It's the peace that comes over you when you sit down to read one of your old trip journals, or the anticipation that bubbles inside when you start sorting through your tackle box early in the spring.

Up North is the smell of the Duluth pack hanging in your basement and the sound of pots clinking across the lake. It's a raindrop clinging to a pine needle and the dancing light of a campfire on the faces of friends.

Up North is a lone set of cross-country ski tracks across a wilderness lake and wood smoke rising from a cabin chimney. It's bunchberries in June, blueberries in July and wild rice in September.

Each of us has an Up North. It's a time and place far from the here and now. It's a map on the wall, a dream in the making, a tugging at one's soul. For those who feel the tug, who make the dream happen, who put the map in the packsack and go, the world is never quite the same again.

We have been Up North. And part of us always will be.

The author of Up North, Sam Cook, first came to Sommers Canoe Base as an Explorer Scout from Kansas in 1964.

Good Memories and Gridlock

By John Thurston

Last weekend Becky and I were visiting our daughter Gretta and our grandson in Dallas. Our other daughter Robin and her two daughters were with us as well. Saturday morning we all loaded up to go to our five year old grandson's soccer game. We were running late and found ourselves in the kind of traffic produced by thousands of soccer parents, on their way to the most important sporting event of the week. At one point, we sat in total gridlock, when a pickup, pulling a trailer-load of canoes, came into sight.

My daughter must have noticed the effect it had on me, because she said "What are you thinking, Dad?" She knows very well where the sight of a canoe takes me. In fact, I think that she goes there too. I am transported to the tranquil beauty of a wilderness lake and that "mini mind trip" has a very calming effect on me. Just before the canoe sighting, I was thinking to myself, "how does an old Charlie Guide... an avid outdoorsman... find himself in so many traffic jams and other unpleasant urban situations." Just the day before I had been packed like a sardine into a very unpleasant commuter flight going to Dallas.

Actually, even though the conditions were horrible on that flight, it wasn't really so bad for me because I was busy pointing out the clouds to my two year old granddaughter and keeping track of all the rivers we crossed as we flew from South to North Texas. The guy ahead of me must have heard me describing or naming every lake, reservoir and river to my granddaughter. He started to ask about every town and city we saw. I have always loved maps and I guess it is second nature to keep track of where I am even on a plane. That uncomfortable time on the cramped plane was actually quite pleasant for me. You see, I wasn't really on the flight... I was busy messing around with boats... traveling the rivers... and introducing my grand daughter to the clouds.

Like many old Charlie Guides, I find myself in an administrative job spending much of each day at a desk with a computer screen worrying about cash flow,

liability, personnel problems and the struggle to keep a complex organization moving ahead. That was definitely not my life's game plan was when I was a Charlie Guide long ago. That's not what I dreamed about doing, as I paddled down a wilderness lake, in a Seliga, during those warm summer afternoons 35 years ago. However, paddling down a wilderness lake or sitting on the rocky edge of a Mackenzie Bay campsite, following a good fish dinner... watching the loons play on a placid lake... is exactly where I find myself whenever I need a little perspective. What I did 35 years ago is exactly what I do for a few blessed moments... almost every day. I am grateful that I have those memories to go to, whenever I feel the need.

There are lots of positive outcomes that we can describe after a trip into Boundary Waters. There are skills learned, leadership experienced, good food, camaraderie and if we are doing it right, we are molding good character in some promising young people.

It was hard for me when we began to call our Charlie Guides, Interpreters. But, as I think back, that's exactly what the good ones were. They helped the crewmembers by introducing them to the beauty, the peacefulness, the history and the unaffected environment around them. Interpreters and old Charlie Guides help the crew member understand and really savor the experience. If we do our job as an interpreter, we also assist them in the collecting of genuine memories... and those memories once accumulated and stored in our conscientious can be played back later, when they need a little serenity or adventure in the more complex and urban world which will likely exist for most in the years to come. Good memories can make gridlock tolerable if not outright fun.



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The Wilderness Castle of Jimmy McQuat

By Chuck Rose



The bright red roof was visible for miles against the green forest backdrop as we paddled north on White Otter Lake. It was a bright day with not a ripple on the water's surface. Slowly, the huge logs of Jimmy McQuat's Castle in the wilderness came into focus. The crew from Texas seemed in awe. Even though I knew what to expect, the site is still a wonder. The main building is 24 by 28 feet; an attached kitchen is 14 by 20 feet. The roof of the main building is 29 feet tall while the four-story tower soars to 41 feet. Inside was stripped bare except for a stair to the remains of a second floor.

The castle is located about 50 trail miles north of the Donald Rogert Canoe Base, the Northern Tier's "satellite base" east of Atikokan, Ontario.

Jimmy McQuat (pronounced ma-koo-it), was born in Scotland in 1878 and came to Canada in the late 1890s. He tried and failed at both farming and prospecting.

In 1903, he "put up his face" for traps and a grubstake in northern Ontario. Here he remained for the rest of his life, acquiring the nickname "Hermit of White Otter Lake". At about 5'7" and 145 lbs., Jimmy seemed an unlikely candidate for hoisting one foot diameter, 35 foot long, green pine logs. Yet, up they went, as many as 43 logs stacked on top of each other, each corner dovetailed. Nearly all the logs were cut within sight of the building and hauled around with a homemade winch. Jimmy also used levers, scaffolding, and certainly ingenuity to craft his dream house. Lots of people have wondered exactly how he did it.

Why would someone, a back country trapper, spend 17 years building a castle 30 miles and 17 portages from the nearest town? An often repeated story I have seen in print and heard is that he built it for a woman back in Scotland who never came to him. It is a romantic story,

based on some fact (he once inquired about a mail order bride), but false.

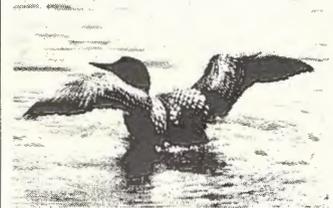
Here, in Jimmy's own words, is the true story as recorded by C.L. Hodson in 1914:

"Oh, just to fill time you know -- just to fill time. No, it isn't true there is something else... Years ago -- Yes, it's a long time now -- we were just boys, y'know -- I had a chum -- one of those jolly chaps -- always playing some prank. One day he threw an ear of corn at another man. It hit him on the ear -- an' he was a bad tempered chap. My -- how he swore! He didn't know who threw it -- no -- but he thought it was me. An' he cursed me -- said I'd die in a shack! Jimmy McQuat -- he says -- Ye'll never do any good -- Ye'll die in a shack. I couldn't tell him my chum done it, so he thought it was me-- said I'd die in a shack. I never forgot it. All the time I lived in a shack I kept thinking -- I must build me a

house. An' so I have. Ye couldn't call it a shack, could ye? No, ye couldn't call it a shack... an' I built it all myself."

Jimmy McQuat died by accidental drowning in 1920, though his body wasn't discovered until 1921. His grave is next to his home in the beautiful wilderness. Volunteer and government help have maintained the castle over the years, where it is becoming more popular as a tourist attraction. In the Atikokan area, Old Jimmy is remembered as a wilderness character akin to Dorothy Molter or Benny Ambrose.

A 1965 brochure by George Wice was used to prepare this article.



Writers Wanted

Do you write poetry about the North Woods? Got a story about the Base or the Canoe Country to share? Please send contributions for the Sommers Alumni Association newsletter or web site to Mike Bingley, mbingley@telusplanet.net.

Staff Scholarships Awarded in 2005

By Michael McMahon

During 2005, the SAA along with the Northern Tier Advisory Committee awarded 28 scholarships to Northern Tier seasonal staff. This year's awards totaled \$25,000 and brought the total scholarship awards to \$174,000. Staff members become eligible for the scholarships after completing two years on the seasonal staff at one of the Northern Tier bases. Each staff member is eligible to receive up to \$3,000 during their careers. The scholarships are awarded directly to the financial aid office of the staff member's school.

The Northern Tier Staff Scholarship fund has three designated scholarships. The **Christopher D. Breen Memorial Scholarship** is awarded to the seasonal staff member who embodies the "can do attitude" and "service to scouts" that were Chris's legacy. The selection is made annually by the professional staff of the Northern Tier High Adventure Program from staff members applying

for the seasonal staff scholarships. The 2005 Christopher D. Breen Memorial Scholarship was awarded to 4th-year staff member **Claire McCasland**, Chief Outfitter of the Ely base. Claire received a \$1,500 scholarship for studies at Baylor University.

The **Terry J. Wall Scholarship** was endowed by Dr. Terry Wall, who participated in the Northern Tier Program as a scout in 1970 and several times as an advisor from 1981 to 1995. The scholarship recipient is selected by the professional staff. The 2005 Terry J. Wall Scholarship was awarded to 3rd-year staff member **Kyle Ford**. The \$1,000 scholarship supports Kyle's studies at Stephen F. Austin State University.

The **Erickson Memorial Scholarship** recognizes an employee who has worked in a base-staff position, gone "above and beyond" expectations in support and service to Northern Tier attendees, demonstrated

leadership to the program and exhibited a strong work ethic. The scholarship recipient is selected by the professional staff. The 2005 recipient of an Erickson Memorial Scholarship is **Ashley Clement**. The \$1,000 scholarship will support her studies at the University of Toronto.

Second-year staff members who received \$500 scholarships and their schools are: **Nathan Brenner**, University of Nevada-Reno; **Jake Coutre**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; **Doran Ford**, Oklahoma State University; **Mark Gefreh**, Colorado School of Mines; **Karl Huemiller**, St. Olaf College; **Charles Kearns**, Northland College; **Travis McCormick**, Miami University; **Jeffrey Simmons**, University of Michigan; **Adam Taylor**, Algonquin College; **Bradley Teson**, Utah State University; and **David Warner, III**, St. Mary's University of Minnesota.

Third-year staff members who received \$1,000 scholarships are: **Israel Andrasko**, University of Texas Pan American; **Margaret Brown**, Benedictine College; **Nicole Christamtsis**, Lakehead University; **Michael L. Johnson**, St. Cloud State University; **Matthew R. Landry**, Lakehead University; **Anya J. Lipchak**, University of Toronto; **Kathryn A. Loynes**, Queen's University; **Troy Martin**, Southeast Missouri State University; **Julie Ravenberg**, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point; and **Sarah Rowsell**, Lakehead University.

Fourth- and fifth-year staff members who received \$1,500 scholarships are: **Timothy J. Davis**, University of Winnipeg; **James Flannery**, Florida State University; **Bradley D. Martin**, Southeast Missouri State University; and **Philip Vanderwerker**, Rutgers College of Engineering.

Within My Power

by Forest Witcraft, Sommers Base Director in 1950
published in *Scouting Magazine*, October 1950

I am not a Very Important Man, as importance is commonly rated. I do not have great wealth, control a big business, or occupy a position of great honor or authority. Yet I may someday mould destiny. For it is within my power to become the most important man in the world in the life of a boy. And every boy is a potential atom bomb in human history. A humble citizen like myself might have been the Scoutmaster of a Troop in which an undersized unhappy Austrian lad by the name of Adolph might have found a joyous boyhood, full of the ideals of brotherhood, goodwill, and kindness. And the world would have been different. A humble citizen like myself might have been the organizer of a Scout Troop in which a Russian boy called Joe might have learned the lessons of democratic cooperation. These men would never have known that they had averted world tragedy, yet actually they would have been among the most important men who ever lived. All about me are boys. They are the makers of history, the builders of tomorrow. If I can have some part in guiding them up the trails of Scouting, on to the high road of noble character and constructive citizenship, I may prove to be the most important man in their lives, the most important man in my community.

A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove. But the world may be different, because I was important in the life of a boy.

Okpik: An Advisor's Story

by Dave Greenlee

Okpik, I am told, is pronounced with a long oo sound, ook-pick. It's an Inuit name for the bird we call the arctic or snowy owl. Since the early 70s, the Canoe Base has provided training in cold-weather camping and winter survival, while providing a super place for skiing, ice fishing, and just plain fun in the snow. In the early days, the Okpik program was teamed up with the military, which used the Base during the week for cold weather survival training. On weekends, the Scouts would come up for a three day camping experience. Today's training is fast-paced, no-nonsense, and professionally presented. The gear is practical, high-tech, and well adapted to the type of snow and cold that the Base enjoys for several months each year.

Members of our Explorer Post from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, understand cold and windy winters, but we have only been on one winter outing together. On that outing, we stayed indoors tending a fire in the Scout house at Newton Hills. Okpik taught us more about how to stay comfortable while having fun in the cold. I think most of our crew just wanted to have fun in the snow, so the up-front training didn't always capture everyone's undivided attention. After we got out on the trail, we found out who was listening!

Our sleeping bags were augmented to become "cold-weather sleeping systems," and those of us who had inadequate footwear checked out "mukluks" and "batwings." Our Peak-1 camp stove got "pre-heater paste," or we could have switched to an alcohol burner. We would be carrying water bottles close to our bodies and we would make an extra effort to keep ourselves hydrated. We would wear

mittens on a string so that we could quickly flip them off, use our hands, and then quickly put them back on.

With our minds packed full of new winter camping techniques, we headed for the heated cabins to rest up. We needed to get some sleep and process this information so we could spend the next night on the trail. It was about zero degrees, and we were told it probably wouldn't be any warmer on Saturday night. Saturday morning, after breakfast in the dining hall, we were outfitted with cross-country skis. They were short and especially well-adapted to maneuvering through the woods. Our trail would be a summer portage trail with tight corners and lots of ups and downs. We checked out covered sleds that resembled little boats that we could drag over the snow easily. We arrived well prepared, but several of us chose to augment our personal gear with parkas, boots, mittens, and hats for more comfort. With our classroom training and outfitting completed, we hit the trail Saturday morning. We find that these skis don't glide as well as touring skis, especially when pulling a sled.

On the other hand, they are quite maneuverable, easy to learn on, and we can move much faster than we would with snow shoes. The skis have "Berwin bindings" that were developed at the Base. With these ingenious devices we ski while wearing the mukluks and felt-lined boots that keep our feet warm.

Winter food is the highest-caloric food we can carry, because we will burn extra fuel just to stay warm. Add to that the demands of skiing and building a snow hut (called a quinzee), and you are talking thousands of calories per day.



They sent us out with lots of gorp, bay bread, peanut butter, and military type MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) that are loaded with fat, carbohydrate, and protein - i.e. fuel for our stoves. It seems like every time the food comes out, a Canada Jay joins us. Some are pretty brazen and certainly earn their nickname - camp robber. In addition to an "in your face" attitude in the winter, we notice that their gray color seems to contrast with the snow much more than the dusty appearance we remember from summer.

After we ski to Flash Lake and take time to explore the shoreline, some of us begin building a quinzee. It's a simple but strenuous job--just pile up a lot of snow and then burrow out the inside. We take turns on the inside so that nobody gets overheated and sweaty--our trainers have warned us that this is a great way to get into trouble later with chills and hypothermia.

There are already some tent-size quinzees left from previous campers, so everybody will have a snow home to sleep in. We don't need no stinking tents! We make supper in the dark, and hit the sack shortly afterwards. Using a newly learned trick, we run around the campsite a bit to generate internal body heat that will initially warm up our sleeping systems. Hey, it works! On Sunday morning, I realize a major difference

between summer and winter. The nights are long! I am quite comfortable in the sack, but I have been in here for about 12 hours now, and it's still dark out. Next time, I'm bringing a flashlight and a good book.

When we finally get up in the light, it doesn't take us much time to pack up our sleds and make our way back to the Base. It was a cold night, but nobody seems to have suffered from the experience. I wouldn't yet profess to be as wise as an Okpik in the ways of winter. I can't say I would want to be snowbound in the woods waiting out a blizzard. But, after an Okpik weekend, I know we are all a bit smarter about cold weather camping. And we had a great time.

Before serving as an Okpik advisor, I was a Charlie Guide and I'd like to challenge other alumni to find a local crew and offer to take them on a winter adventure in Winter 99/00. It's difficult to find advisors and fathers willing to go on such a challenging campout. The kids are usually ready to go! The Base has an excellent training program and enough gear to outfit everybody in polypro underwear. If I can do it, you can do it. Aim for a four day weekend. Two nights on the trail would be much better, and you would have more time to have fun skiing and looking around. Hope to see you on the trail next winter.

Filling the Blank Spots on the Map

By Chuck Rose



As Lewis and Clark traveled the Upper Missouri, they named inflowing streams and lakes after their relatives, party members, or girlfriends. When they ran out of girlfriends, they named rivers after politicians (President Jefferson and other supporters). The streams had native names, of course, but they were recording the land for the first time for their culture; identifying the landmarks was essential. However, few of the names survive on subsequent maps due to the long delay in printing their journals.

French-Canadian explorers like La Verendrye faced a similar problem when traveling through the Quetico-Superior and used a similar solution. Lakes were given descriptive names (Rainy Lake for the mist at its waterfall outlet), named for their shapes, to honor sponsors, and for girlfriends. On a 1975 canoe trip on Lake of the Woods, my troop had a similar problem. Most of the islands had no names at least on the map, so (lacking girlfriends) we named the islands after ourselves. Filling the blank spots on the maps was important to all kinds of people.

During written history, several cultures have come and gone in the Quetico-Superior canoe country. The first natives recorded were the Dakota (called Sioux by their enemies) who yielded the unproductive but picturesque land to the Cree and Ojibway in the 18th century who had moved in from the east. There were a number of skirmishes in the area, but the Dakota seemed to give up the area much more quickly than other areas such as central Minnesota. The Ojibway were armed with fur trade rifles, but to some that explanation is insufficient.

Forest ecologists Clifford and Isabel Ahlgren speculate that the hunting-culture Dakota were dependant on large prey such as caribou, moose and deer. The forest shifted to large pines that were less suitable to those deer; the Ojibway culture was better adapted to the new landscape. The Ojibway were more mobile hunter-gatherers and preferred birch bark covered wigwams to

Dakota hide covered teepees. Since native tribes did not have a written language, their maps were mainly mental, names were passed on by oral tradition. As a result, their lake names were often long and descriptive. Batchewaung is Ojibway for "a current going through narrows." Kahshahpiwi translates to "the lakes flows through continuously," another

names (Alice, Bernice, Fran and others) came from the wives and girlfriends of these isolated men. The Quetico Park also honored World War I soldiers by naming (off the beaten path) lakes after them. Examples include Devine, Fluker, Montgomery, Belaire, Tubman, Tario, and Wilbur. Bush pilots are represented by Curtis, Ptolemy, Reid, and Swartman. The Quetico also has

Some Lake Name meanings and origins

Amik - Ojibway for Beaver

Bitchu Cree for Lynx

Blackstone - Leader of small Ojibway band who were the last permanent residents of the Quetico (living at the mouth of the Wawiag River). He died in 1919 trying to get help when the band was struck by an influenza epidemic. In the spring, the few survivors were moved to the Lac La Croix reservation.

Cutty and Sark - a fast sailing clipper or maybe after the whiskey named for the ship.

Kawnipi - Ojibway for where there are cranberries.

Keewatin - Ojibway for where the north wind blows from.

Chatterton, Keats and Shelley were 18th-19th century English poets.

PoohBah, Ko Ko (Falls) and Yum Yum - Characters in the Gilbert and Sullivan opera *The Mikado*.

Nym is a character in Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Lac La Croix - translates from French to lake of the cross, explorer sieur de la Croix drown there in 1688.

Tanner - after John Tanner, stolen as a young boy in Kentucky to take the place of a Shawnee mother's dead son, he became famous by his Indian name "White Falcon." He was shot and left for dead on "his" lake, but was rescued by passing voyageurs.

Last, but not least **Quetico** - A name of uncertain origin, which one is correct? I don't know.

- version of a Cree word for benevolent spirit
- French for searching for route to Pacific "Quete de la cote"
- Ojibway for "bad, dangerous"
- short for Quebec Timber Company.

translation says "long, narrow lake with high cliffs." Even Ojibway language experts have trouble translating current names as the sounds to European ears and the spellings are not always accurate.

Voyager names still dot the map and define the fur trade routes. Deux Riveres (two rivers), and Maligne (bad) are some examples. Many place names are English versions of earlier names including Knife Lake (after the hard, fine grained rock that was quarried by the natives for cutting tools), Curtain Falls was "rideau" in French. As different cultures moved through, the map names changed. One of the next groups to leave their mark was the loggers. Many of the small lakes away from the main canoeing routes needed names so everyone involved could communicate. It's possible that some of the female lake

a tradition of naming lakes after park personnel. Art, Atkins, Halliday, Payne, Lemay, Hurn, Buckingham, Dettbarn, Quinn, Rawn, and Valley were all Quetico rangers. Naturalist Shan Walshe received this honor after his 1991 death. A Friends of the Quetico booklet states "This previously unnamed lake, remote, surrounded by stands of old pine at the end of difficult portages was the kind of place that Shan loved." Of course, naming lakes after plants, animals, and geologic features was also common.

Local lore varies on how certain lakes were named. Bill Magie was an Ely canoe guide, surveyor, and logger. In the book *Wonderful Country* (edited by Charlie Guide David Olesen) Magie states: "One time, my boss

told me, 'Name some of those places!' So, we did. Hurn Lake, that's named after Walter Hurn, the ranger at Kings Point. Jeff Lake is named after a ranger at Ottawa Island. MacKenzie and Ferguson were surveyors that were workin' on the park survey. Delahey Lake—I was the guy started namin' it Delahey. Delahey was the head Quetico ranger then. I wrote him one day, I says, 'Why don't you name some of those lakes? There's three or four right in the center of the park that haven't got a name.' Veron was his first name. He named 'em after himself!"

Well, he probably didn't have a girlfriend. Note: other sources say that Delahey's first name was George.

Depending on the map scale, there may not be room to print the names of all the map features. As a result, officially named lakes get additional names from paddlers including Charlie Guides. Lakes with double or even triple names from various sources include Darky/Spirit, Fishhook/Earl, Donna/Irene, Argo/Trout, Tuck/Caribou, Brent/Infinity, Pine/Island/Nym, and Sanctuary/Lemay/Jenny. There is probably a few wives and girlfriends in these mixtures.

When Charlie Guides first started traveling in Manitoba, many of the lakes were unnamed, at least on the map. So Lunch Lake became the name for the resting spot in the middle of the Obukowin chain of portages, Scout Lake is our float plane cache, Hot Dog is a long, skinny lake, and even though we don't know the translation, Wapeskapek just seems like an endless lake.

The Manitoba program started in large part due to Real Berard's canoe route maps. In the Boundary Waters, we can travel on Lakes One, Two, and Three. From his first maps on, Berard has predominantly used place names from the native Cree, Sasaginnigak Canoe Country or Katunigan Route. "And doesn't that sound better than a number for a lake?" he asks.

Head North Philmonters, Head North

by Bill Cass

During my Philmont ranger days, we would occasionally hear some crews (usually from the upper mid-west) carrying on about what a great time they had at some Scouting regional canoe base along the Canadian border. Surely, I thought to myself, these folks can't seriously be comparing a few days of canoe camping out of some Minnesota back bay with a mountain-top, Philmont High Adventure experience where spirits soar. Spirits don't paddle, do they? And they certainly don't portage.

Three decades would pass before I would learn why those campers from that distant summer were indeed comparing our High Country with the Great North Woods. And with good reason, too. Heresy? "There are High Adventure bases and then there's Philmont," you say. But you won't know until you load those Duluth packs into a canoe and paddle up Moose Lake for your enlightenment. As our council's High Adventure Chairman, it occurred to me that even though we send around ten crews to the Ranch every summer from Chester County Council, I should experience the other national bases first hand. Thus, I was off for my first (and certainly not last) trip to Northern Tier High Adventure/Sommers Canoe Base last year.

To be sure, there are similarities. We of Philmont have no monopoly on rocky

trails, bears (both mini- and black), or starlit nights so bright that you almost have to squint when gazing heavenward. Tough trails? Yes, it is tough hauling some 43-pound pack up the southwest side of Mount Phillips or the eastern rim of Wilson Mesa, but not tougher than hauling an 80-pound, hip-belt-less food pack over some high grade portage trails. For sure.

Come with me now to the North Woods by paddle. To a place where you can still hear a howling timber wolf at night. And listen to the common loon's eerie tremolo on a moonlight-silvered lake. Or camp within earshot of Basswood Falls' mighty roar. Watch the sun-glittered droplets fly from your paddle as you cruise below the magnificent cliffs on the northern end of Sarah Lake. On many rocks in those timberland lakes, you can still see "pictographs" left by the Chippewa hundreds of years ago as they celebrated successful hunts and paid homage to their forbearers and holy spirits.

Camp where you will. Invariably below soaring bald eagles. In little clearings above rocky, lakeside bluffs. Inhale those vistas of sunlight dancing on sparkling waters along deep-forested shores. Relax in pine needle-softened settings that will make you think of Copper Park or Old Abreu. Pitch your tent on a lake's southeast shore so as to enjoy a sunset that only Florida Sea Base or Mount

Phillips can rival.

Listen to the night sounds the wind in the leaves, the splash of water just yards away, the loons chasing their demons (or is it vice versa), and the great horned owls hooting close by as the first hint of light streaks the eastern sky.

Bring your compass. You will need it in the morning since we cannot navigate as faultlessly as some of the wildlife we have seen and heard.

Paddle on all kinds of water: mostly smoothwater (sometimes so still you'll swear you're skating on ice or skimming across glass), some fastwater, a little whitewater, and the occasional backwater where the mighty moose graze and a playful otter plays.

Catch a tasty dinner of smallmouth bass and northern pike, and cook them within minutes of netting them. Or, if you are talented, go deep for lake trout and walleyes, and watch them fighting the hook way down, 50 feet or more in those crystal-clear waters. Pick some blueberries on the edge of your campsite, and make muffins in Sommers' unique, lightweight trail ovens.

Visualize paddling down the "S" chain of lakes: Silence, Sultry, Summer, Shade, and Sunday Lakes. Blue sky and blue water all the way. Camp on an island and listen to the gentle lapping of waves as you fall asleep dreaming about the 12 miles you've paddled that day. Camp in the forest where pine marten prowl the branches and bobcats lurk in the shadows.

Portage over the same trails used by the Ojibway and French Canadian trappers. Forget about the crowds. Trail signs. Waiting in line. The phone. The fax. It's just you. The crew. Canoes. And the Great North Woods.

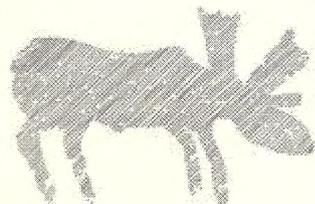
Think about cooling off in that natural rock bowl half-way

up Louisa Falls where laughter-drenched waters splash over your shoulders, now toughened by a week of paddling through the world's most pristine canoe area wilderness.

Maybe even learn to speak Minnesot'n, y'know.

Like most Scouting summer camping experiences, our Northern Tier expedition #807-A concluded much too soon, but created a lasting impression, new opinions, and the urge to share the adventure at that Northland paradise. When you arrive there, you will not be met by a ranger. Rather, it will be an "interpreter," a kindred spirit who's looking for what lies around the bend in the lake the same way we seek what's beyond the mountain pass.

Those of us who backpacked professionally as rangers at Philmont, can truly sing about going back to "where the old Rayado flows" and where the "rain comes a'seepin' in the tent where you're a'sleepin'." And a lucky few of us can also dream about going back to Isabella Lake, to Heartstop Hill, to the Meadows Portage, and to the Tuck River, too.



"Hol-Ry!"

The author, William Cass, is a former (and future) Sommers advisor and associate member of the SAA. He is the author of "Return to the Summit of Scouting," a book about a former ranger (Bill) as he returns to Philmont as an expedition advisor and father (Wilderness Adventure Books, ISBN:0-923568-29-8).

Membership has its privileges

by Chuck Rose

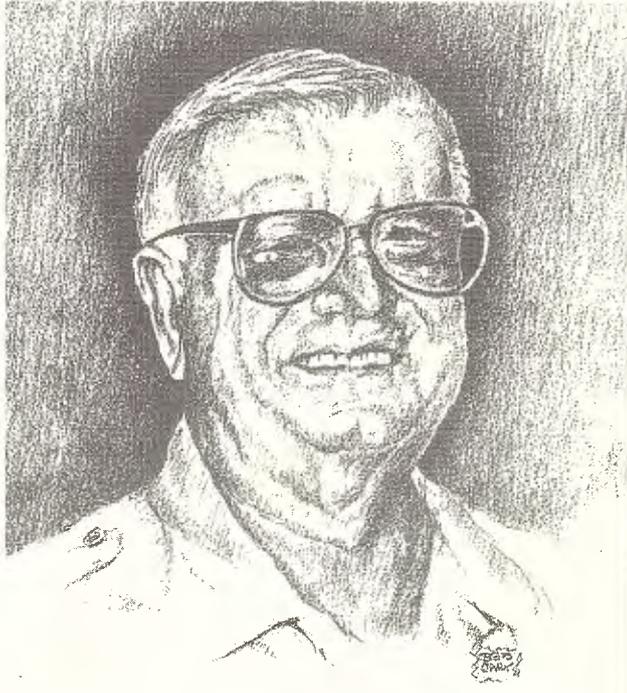
Honestly, I didn't know. But when the sirens flashed, I glanced at my speedometer. Yep, too fast.

"May I see your license?" the officer said. After the usual exchange, he continued, "Well, everyone appears to be buckled up tight and anyone from Sommers can't be all bad so I'll just give you a warning."

He had seen my HOL-RY! bumper sticker and Sommers Alumni Association membership decal. Seems that he had been to the Base three times as a Scout, he obviously had a good time.

If you haven't already, join the SAA (your membership benefits may vary).

Hudson Bay Bread



Two of Many Recipes

Mapleine version

2 cups brown sugar
1/3 cup molasses
1/3 cup honey
1 tsp. mapleine
2 cups butter or
margarine
9 ½ cups quick oats
1 cup chopped nuts

Vanilla version

2 cups white sugar
1/3 cup Light Karo
1/3 cup honey
1 tsp. vanilla
2 cups butter or
margarine
9 ½ cups quick oats
1 cup chopped nuts

Cream all ingredients except oats/nuts. Then add oats/nuts and mix well. Spread into 2 greased cookie sheets about 1/2 inch thick Bake at 360 degrees for about 8 minutes. The mixture puffs up while baking. Roll it down with a rolling pin and bake again until golden brown (about 8 more minutes). Roll down again or it will crumble. Don't overbake. Cut while warm, leave in pans to cool. Feel free to experiment with different ingredients.

The Rest of the Story... *By Sandy Bridges*

I don't know if I have ever told you this story or not. It is what I will call the "rest of the story". Hudson Bay bread did come to us via Floyd Lindval of the old Barbara Ann Bakery in Ely. Floyd told me that Outward Bound had gotten the recipe from their headquarters in Europe. This was about 1967 or 68, Outward Bound had just gotten started, I believe in either 1964 or 65. Sorry I can't remember their first year. The story that was told to Floyd was that it was a version of a high energy bar carried by Edmund Hillary (circa 1953) when he successfully climbed Mt. Everest. It was supposedly made by a woman in England

(evidentially much of his provisioning was done in England). This recipe is a takeoff on a popular oatmeal bar called a "flap jack" in England. I have talked to many that recognize "flap jacks", they are usually cut like small cookies (biscuits of course to our English friends). It was modified to be as complete a "ration" as possible with several types of sugar (carbohydrates), fat and proteins. The several sugars were supposed to be absorbed at different rates giving a longer heat and energy level (this may or may not be true, but makes a good part of the story anyways). Floyd added the "all American" flavor of Mapleine. He thought it

was going to be a hit, brought it out to me and said he was going to call them "Flap Jacks". We gave them a try -- instant success!! Sitting in the old office (formerly the trading post) of the "Bay Post" one afternoon several guides were telling me how the Scouts liked the "Flap Jacks" but the name seemed a little wrong since we call pancakes flapjacks. I agreed -- I said, rather flippantly as I recall, we will just call it "Hudson Bay Bread". The name stuck and many others started to use it. Everyone of course had their own version; peanuts instead of almonds, then walnuts. Northern Wisconsin even added raisins at one time

-- everyone wanted to take credit for developing it but now you know the "rest of the story" -- It came to us from Outward Bound via Floyd at the bakery but was named looking out over Moose Lake from the "trail staff" office of OUR Bay Post!! The first time I saw it in print was the book by Ragsdale, a former Advisor from Texas. I have now seen it in so many cookbooks I couldn't begin to tell you the number. Originally our version was oatmeal, fats (mostly margarines), almonds and Floyd's magic touch of Mapleine.

Sandy Bridges was Director of Northern Tier from 1972-1997.