Alumni Executive Committee Meets

Reports Activities for 1994

The Sommers Alumni Association Executive Committee, consisting of David M. Hyink, Barry K. Bain, Blaine R. Diesslin, Nigel J. Cooper and Zane Grey Beaton met on Saturday, February 19, 1994 at the Minneapolis Athletic Club. Others present were Sandy Bridges, Bob Christie, John Christiansen, Roy Conradi, Dave Greenlee, Mike Holdgrafer, Paul Schlieve and Bill Spice, National Director of High Adventure Programs.

Treasurer Nigel Cooper reported that we are fiscally solvent.

The membership of the alumni association is now over 200, with 130 Life members and 31 Honorary Charter members. The plastic membership cards for the Life members should be sent shortly and a member directory will be sent to members in March.

The lodge renovation fund is just under $32,000—including the $10,000 challenge match from Jim Sowell. Jim has been presented a laser engraved walnut plaque as a token of our appreciation. The plaque has the drawing of the Lodge engraved on it. The closing date for donor recognition will be the 1994 annual membership meeting.

The alumni Christmas Card Sale will be an annual activity with a new card design every year. There are still a few 1993 cards available.

The association paid $1,500 of the purchase price of a new hand-made Birch Bark Canoe. Bob Cary arranged for the purchase of the canoe from the builder.

The association purchased a limited edition print to be displayed in the Lodge, depicting Voyageurs in North Canoes.

The committee voted unanimously to grant Bob Cary an Honorary Life membership, in recognition of Bob's wonderful support of the Northern Tier programs through donations of his time and talents.

The executive committee accepted Jay Walne's proposal for an alumni association annual giving campaign, to help fund some of the special needs of Northern Tier.

Dave Hyink brought the committee up-to-date on the status of the BWCAW management plan appeals process.

The committee agreed that the Association will act as the fiscal agent for an endowed Staff Scholarship/Fellowship Program to recognize exemplary summer staff members.

The date for the Annual Membership Meeting was set for September 4, 1994 at Sommers Canoe Base.

Directors Barry Bain, Zane Beaton and John Christiansen were nominated for re-election as directors. Additional director nominations are being accepted. A discussion of increasing the number of directors followed with no action being taken.

Sandy Bridges gave an update of the status of the Forest Service's intent in regard to a Guide/Packer Special Use Fee.

John Christiansen has agreed to be the alumni association Historian/Archivist. He will be encouraging staff alumni to donate photos from their staff days—especially those of other staff and staff activities.

Annual Meeting

Sept. 4
At Base

The Annual Meeting of the members of the Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc. will be held on Sunday, September 4, 1994, at 10:00 a.m. at the Ely Base. In odd numbered years, this meeting is held in conjunction with the Reunion. In this non-Reunion year, the location and date was chosen to coincide with the summer meeting of the Northern Tier National High Adventure Committee (September 3). Members are encouraged to attend even though no formal program is planned. Details of the meeting will be sent in mid-July, along with member Proxies. On the agenda will be the election of three directors. The Board has re-nominated directors Bain, Beaton, and Christiansen for another three-year term. Additional nominations from the membership will be accepted until July 31, 1994. Also on the agenda for the annual meeting, will be a proposal to authorize the addition of three more directors. We ask that you share your thoughts with us on this matter.
Tidbits On The Sommers Clan

Torben Andersen ('80-'81) is a graduate student; came from Copenhagen, Denmark for the Reunion.

Albert "Rich" Batterman ('86-'91) is a professional scouter in Minneapolis, MN.

Doug Bender ('88-'91) is a Computer Programmer in St. Louis, MO.

Paula Bond ('82) is a Software Quality Coordinator in Sidney, Australia.

David Bryce ('78-'83) is a Lawyer in Georgetown, TX.

Roy Cerny ('64-'71) is doing Apartment Maintenance in Eagan, MN.

Ed Chapin, Committee Member since 1962; committee person in charge of the "A-Go-Go Project;" spends winters in Bloomington, MN and summers in Lutsen, MN.

Mike Clarke 1983 Expedition Leader, is an Orthopedic Surgeon in Springfield, MO.

Jerry Cox ('57-'63) is teaching Biological and Earth Sciences in the Minnetonka, MN public schools.

Bryan ('78-'86) and Anne (Gilliard) Craft are living in Medina, OH where Bryan is a Supervisor for BF Goodrich. They are expecting their second child in August.

David Damberg ('50) is a Health Care Facilities Consultant in St. Paul, MN.

Gene Felton ('51-'53; Committee '73-present) has retired to Bella Vista, AR.

Lorrin Ferdinand ('86-'87) is a Peace Corps Volunteer in Burundi, Africa.

Steve Gottschalk ('65-'66) is an Attorney in Minneapolis, MN; found out about the Alumni Association when he picked up the Winter, 1992 Reflections and read his name in the "Lost Guides" list.

John Graham ('68-'70) is an Investments Manager in London, England.

Harlan Hanson ('61-'66) is Manager, MN Job Services Office in Mora, MN.

Scott Heinecke ('83) is a Professional Scouter in San Anselmo, CA.

Don "Digger" Helms ('67-'70) is a Customer Engineer for IBM in Colorado Springs, CO.

Bob Henry ('61-'63) is a Dentist in Sunriver, OR.

Dallas Hill ('78-'81) is a Mechanical Engineer in Los Alamos, NM.

Loren J. Hill ('76) works for Capital Associates, lives in Littleton, CO.

Richard C. Hill ('50-'57) is a Professor at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks.

Mike Holdgrafer ('77-'82, Committee '92) is an Attorney in Tulsa, OK.

Tim Huebner ('70-'73) is a Communications Engineer in Needham, MA.

Kay Ingebrigtsen ('48-'49) has retired from Dentistry and is living in Fridley, MN.

Alumni Association Directors and Officers

Director/President (2)* Dave Hyink (206) 863-6406
Director/Secretary (2) Butch Diesslin (218) 365-6904
Director (2) Roy Conradi (404) 496-0920
Director (1) John Christiansen (417) 646-8214
Director (1) Barry K. Bain (612) 944-5178
Director (1) Lorri Hanson (503) 744-2814
Director (3) Jay Walne (901) 278-2633
Director (3) Dave Greenlee (605) 371-2209
Treasurer Nigel Cooper (612) 738-1242

*Number in parentheses is years remaining in current term

Program Liaisons

Mr. Bill Spice National Director of High Adventure
Philmont Scout Ranch, BSA
Cimarron, NM 88714
(505) 376-2281

Mr. Sandy Bridges Director, Northern Tier National High Adventure Program
P.O. Box 509
Ely, MN 55731-0509
(218) 365-4811

Mr. Robert La Fortune Chairman, National High Adventure Committee
427 S. Boston #2104
Tulsa, OK 74103-4132

Mr. Charley Hann Chairman, Northern Tier National High Adventure Committee
475 Peavey Building
730 Second Ave. So.
Minneapolis, MN 55402
(612) 338-9019

Historical Items Sought

A number of SAA members have contacted us about items they have that might have some historical value to the Base, the BWCAW, and/or the Quetico. Butch Diesslin has agreed to coordinate efforts to collect and distribute any items you might wish to contribute. For example, Barry Bain has Dorothy Molter's Root Beer recipe — written in her own hand. This will likely be donated to the Molter Museum in Ely. Other items may be used in the Charles L. Sommers Lodge or the Hedrick Library. Roy Conradi said he will donate photographs taken during the '50's and '60's, including pictures of Sig Olson during his Base visits. Check your attic for old maps, journals, photos, or other items of significance.
BWCAW Management Plan Update

The formal appeal period on the Final BWCAW Management Plan (summarized in the previous issue of Reflections) and Environmental Impact Statement ended on November 17, 1993. A number of appeals were filed on behalf of such groups as Conservationists With Common Sense and the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness. The SAA, the Northern Tier High Adventure Program — BSA, and the Lake Superior Council — BSA, all petitioned the U.S. Forest Service for status as an Intervenor. Upon careful review of hundreds of pages of appeal documents by dozens of appellants, the SAA formally intervened in support of 12 appeals that dealt with the issue of a three-watercraft maximum per group. Citing specific safety issues, flexibility, and imperceptible wilderness impact, we supported an increase to a maximum of four watercrafts per party. A copy of our remarks may be obtained from the SAA.

1993 Reunion T-Shirts Available!

We still have a few Sommers Alumni Association 1993 Reunion T-Shirts left for sale. These gray, heavy duty 98% cotton shirts carry SAA’s “Twilight Paddlers” logo on the upper-left front. The cost is $10 postage paid. Please state size S/M/L/XL/XXL when ordering. Limited to sizes on hand. Send check and order to SAA, P.O. Box 428, Ely, MN 55731.

Henry Bradlich Honored With Drawing

Henry Bradlich, who inspired many of us who worked at the Canoe Base, was honored at a luncheon in his hometown of Virginia, Minnesota on February 14. A small group of Sommers alumni gathered to present Henry with a framed portrait of himself. The drawing was done by Bob Cary from a photograph taken by Roy Conradi. Henry, who was taken by surprise by the presentation, said later, “Jane and I really appreciate the portrait. The more I look at the portrait, the more I value the combined efforts of Roy and Bob in producing this character study. I never looked at myself this way before, but I like what I see. Thanks.”

Contributions Needed for Newsletter

We would like to hear from you. This newsletter is to share stories, photos and information with other alumni. Get out your pen and drop us a note. Dig out an old photograph. Let us know what you are doing for our Tidbits column. Send or fax your contributions to newsletter editor, Roy Conradi, 3882 Cedar Circle, Tucker, Georgia 30084. 404-496-0920. Fax 404-355-3308.

If You Move Let Us Know

Because we mail all of our correspondence at bulk rates, we do not get undelivered mail returned to us. Nor do you automatically get our material forwarded to you. If you have a change of mailing address, please advise us directly!
President’s Message

The day was warm and sunny. The message was simple, yet very profound. It was August 15 at the Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery, and I stopped by for a “Scout’s Own” service with nearly 1500 youth and leaders from the Western Region prior to my departure for Ft. A.P. Hill and the 1993 National Boy Scout Jamboree. The Chaplain talked of what a rare treat this occasion was for him, since his normal duties included performing several funerals each day, in addition to visiting “old soldiers” in local Veteran’s Homes and Hospitals.

On this day, as with most everyday, Arlington was a most inspiring scene. The Chaplin spoke to us about his special place — the final resting spot for thousands of “...ordinary people, who through their efforts, did extraordinary things.” He clearly conveyed to the Scouts and to their leaders, that like their predecessors at Arlington, they would have many seemingly ordinary opportunities to produce what would surely be extraordinary results. That each one of them was special, and had not only the ability — but an obligation, to make a difference — not only in their own lives, but in the lives of others.

The Chaplin went on to relate some common themes that surrounded his conversations with “old soldiers” as they looked back on their lives and thought about what they might have done differently. Then he used those themes to suggest how the Scouts and their leaders might view the upcoming Jamboree, as well as in general. Reflect More — Take some time to slow your pace, observe your surroundings, examine your feelings, and think (in real time) what this experience means to you. Risk More — It’s easy to stay in your “comfort zone,” in “familiar surroundings,” with “familiar people,” but real growth (and real reward) takes place when you venture from where you are and seize new opportunities. Take an active part in something that lives longer than you do — By your actions, make a difference while you’re here that will continue to make a difference after you’re gone. As I listened and thought about what the Chaplain was saying, it became obvious to me that these three elements stood at the very core of my experience and continued involvement with Sommers. And, I suspect that each of you would come to much the same conclusion as you ponder the Chaplain’s message. The Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc. offers each of us additional opportunities for reflection, for risk and reward, and for taking an active part in something that lives longer than we do. I invite each of you to maintain or increase your involvement with us, as we seek to make a difference in the development of our nation’s youth through providing a quality wilderness experience.

Message from Sandy

Well, it is time to “seize the moment!” There have been few opportunities when the prospects for the future of wilderness camping have looked better! Northern Minnesota, along with much of the rest of the country, has had one of the coldest winters on record; the OKPIK program did well, however, and we are on our way towards a fantastic summer.

The 1993 attendance was not much to brag about (bad weather [rainy and cold], midwest floods, Jamboree, etc.), but due to an excellent staff, it was one of the safest summers on record. All three Bases had a great program year. The reservations for 1994 are well ahead of previous years with over 400 crews signed up by the first of March.

The new administrative office will be up prior to summer and that means a new “TeePee” as well! The old office will be the NEW staff center. Through the help of Chuck Buenger and Bill Spice (past and present National Directors of High Adventure) the National Order of the Arrow has to agree to build a new gateway and entrance to the Ely Base. A big thanks are due Chuck, Bill and the Order of the Arrow. I have just the plan. The Atikokan Base will be getting power this Summer or early Fall and the Perch Lake Community is looking for volunteers to help with the project. A great way to see the Atikokan Base (and help us get power) and get in a little fishing to boot.

Interested in the Quetico? I suggest you get involved! A pro-active stance will help Scouts and leaders in the future. An excellent organization to join: FRIENDS OF THE QUETICO, Box 1959, Atikokan, ON POT ICD, Canada. Dues for a “friend” are $10.00 (Canadian) per year. Their motto is: “Assist in the preservation of Quetico as an outstanding wilderness area.”

Greeting Cards Successful Plans Underway for ’94

Following upon the recent success of our first Holiday Greeting card project, headed by Jay Walne and Roy Comnadi, plans are underway to produce a second design for use in 1994. The timelines will be moved up considerably, and ordering will begin in late Summer for delivery in mid-October. Given continued support by SAA members, we foresee a new design each year. In addition, we will also produce some “blanks” that may be used year-round for note cards. Packets (25 cards) of the original “Winter Lodge” scene are still available from SAA, P.O. Box 428, Ely 55731 for $25 (post-paid) while supply lasts.
I wish each of you could have been present at the February Committee meeting in Minneapolis, and could have experienced firsthand the enthusiasm generated by the progress of Northern Tier programs.

Long-term registrations (more than 90% paid) for the 1994 summer canoe program exceed 3,000, 32% greater than a year ago. Registrations for Atikokan and Bissett are up more than 50%.

Construction is underway for the new administrative office at the Sommers Base. It, as well as the Staff Center and new entrance portal, will be ready for us in June. The new Phase I Outfitting building is also funded and approved for construction, and will be ready in the fall. The new Depot building, improved roadways and parking area are approved for funding in 1995.

With the leadership of the Alumni Association, the completion of the Sommers Lodge is assured. This beautiful building will be in use this year. For the interpretive center in the Lodge the Committee approved the interactive TV concept demonstrated at the meeting by Paul Schlieve. The design cost of the system is a major contribution, and the equipment cost was approved as a Committee fund raising effort.

The Northern Tier Fishing Invitational, being developed to provide some of the funding for the staff scholarship program, is scheduled for September 16-19 at Campbell's in La Ca Croix. All friends of Northern Tier are invited. Mike Holdgrafer can provide details.

Things are in place to make this the best year ever for Northern Tier. The Committee is most appreciative of the commitment by members of the Alumni Association to the programs.

Decreasing BWCAW Permits Make Reservations Difficult

Each year, there seems to be increasing demand for a decreasing number of permits to enter the BWCAW and the Quetico. This year, the U.S. Forest Service has transferred BWCAW reservations from their Duluth office to an independent contractor, Biospherics, Inc. in Maryland. These factors (plus a few others) have made obtaining canoe-country reservations quite complicated and time-consuming — particularly for BWCAW permits. Therefore, the Base has requested that Alumni take responsibility for obtaining their own reservations for "unofficial trips". Reservations may be made over the telephone (with Visa or Mastercard) by calling: 1-800-745-3399 for the BWCAW and 1-807-597-2735 for the Quetico. Be warned... very few permits remain for the 1994 season.

Seliga Workshop Destroyed By Fire

Fire put a temporary halt to the production of Seliga canoes in Ely on February 10. Joe, who had been working in his backyard shop earlier that morning, had gone into the house for coffee when the fire erupted. "You don't expect it. It comes on so quick," he said. Lost in the fire were four canoes and all of his tools (some of the tools given to him by his dad). Seliga was able to salvage the main part of his canoe form from which he builds his 17-foot, wood-and-canvas canoes. A week after the fire, Joe and his wife Nora, family and friends were cleaning up and salvaging what they could from the shop. At age 82, Joe said he wasn't sure if he would get back into production. "We'll see how it goes," reported Joe. "I'll let the Sommers alumni who have ordered canoes know what I plan to do."

1995 Reunion Date Set

Dave Greenlee, Dave Sitzer, Mark Nordstrom, Ray Mattson, and Roy Cerny comprise the Planning and Organizing Committee for the next Sommers Alumni Reunion, September 2-4, 1995. Put these dates on your calendar now, and send any ideas you have for them to SAA, P.O. Box 428, Ely, MN 55731.

Alumni Directory Mailed

A directory of all current SAA members has been printed and mailed. If you are a member in good standing (meaning either a Life or Honorary member, or an annual member with 1994 dues paid) and have not received your copy, please let us know. If you're not a member and would like to join, drop us a note — SAA, P.O. Box 428, Ely, MN 55731.
Furnishings Needed For New Staff Center

When the new Administrative Offices are completed at the Ely Base this spring, the existing offices will be converted to a new Staff Center (e.g. modern-day TeePee). The necessary interior furnishings are not currently funded, but will clearly be necessary for the 1994 season. Needed items include furniture, television equipment, an audio sound system, book shelves and video storage, tables and chairs. These items should be new, nearly new, or in very good condition; and of sufficient durability and quality to ensure good performance for years to come. Exact specifications for these items may be obtained from architect Don Melander or from Sandy Bridges. The new office could use a plain paper FAX as well. If you have any ideas on how we might obtain these items, please call Dave Hyink (206) 863-6406 or write us at Box 428, Ely, MN 55731.

Alumni Asked To Train 1994 Summer Staff

Mike Holdgrafer has taken on the task of developing the curriculum and organizing the 1994 Summer Staff Training. He hopes to use as many Sommers alumni as he can in the actual training which begins in early June. He feels that the best trainers are those "...who have been there", and also believes that alumni/staff interaction is an important element in providing continuity and maintaining the rich traditions of Sommers and the Northern Tier Program. If you'd like to participate, give Mike a call at (918) 743-5565 (h) or (918) 581-1842 (w).

All Alumni To Continue Receiving Reflections

At the February 19 meeting of the SAA Director's Executive Committee, it was decided to continue publication and distribution of Reflections to all Sommers Alumni for which we have addresses. Although this puts some strain on our publication budget, the Directors felt that ongoing communication was an essential part of our mission; and, that by not doing so, we would have a much reduced opportunity to encourage non-members to join. This policy will be re-examined on a year-to-year basis — particularly in light of our financial resources.

If you enjoy receiving Reflections and have not yet joined SAA, we encourage you to do so, and would welcome your support. If you do not wish to receive future correspondence, please let us know and we will remove you from our mailing list.

Send Articles

Please forward any articles, comments, news, jokes, cartoons, songs, poetry, or announcements that you would like to consider for publication in upcoming newsletters.
‘Old’ Guides Return to BWCA/Quetico For Trip Into the Past

by John Christiansen

Been out on the trail lately? Gone canoeing, fishing or camping? Okay, so you dreamt of the good old days, but you do know that you can still get out in the BWCA or Quetico if you want, and the Sommers Canoe Base can help. Let me relay a little story that happened last year just before the alumni reunion.

Around the first of August, I received a call from Zane Beaton asking if I would like to go out in the woods with him and a handful of others. Some had been guides while we were at the canoe base and some not. It sounded good, so I agreed to meet them a week prior to the reunion at the canoe base.

I arrived at the base on Sunday evening and met with Jay Walne, Zane Gray Beaton, Monty Dodson, Jeff Dahl, and Rich Batterman. The group was an interesting mix, mostly of middle age remembering guides, but also one recently retired voyager. Twenty years plus has given this group an investment broker, engineer, chemist, medical technician and ranger. Youth brought us a Boy Scout district executive.

Age brought questions and youth brought answers. “The tent goes in the kettle pack?” Where is the cold, wet, heavy tent goes in the kettle pack? “Do we have everything!” About $50.00 for each person to get into the park for six days and a fishing license, TP, yes in the food pack. Aspirin, band-aids, compass and maps. Make out an itinerary and lets hit the sauna, we want to be at Prairie Portage by 8:00 a.m.

“Bear rope!” Yes, to hang the food pack out of the reach of the Garbage Bears.

Grabbing a green nylon pack on a frame we headed for the commissary to pack food. No tin cans, shot puts we outgrew years ago, just as plastic bags replaced the cloth sacks for flour, sugar, etc. As noodles, hashbrowns, powdered eggs, bread and granola were packed, there was constant chatter in the air. North Bay, Isabella, Side Lake, no it was Kahshahpiwi the first night.

As we moved to personal packs, gear became the subject. The A3 Duluth pack seemed more like an A2 as we tried to cram more in it. They are now nylon, have strings instead of buckles and have handles at the ear of the pack. (Seems redundant and amusing that the younger generation can’t use a built-in handle.)

Burt, Brent, Darky, Argo and home through Crooked? Wait a minute, this a vacation and most of us are 20 years our senior. How about Joyce, Burt, Paulette, McIntyre, Cecil, Tuck, and Kett. Okay with a layover in Joyce for some fishing. By the way, any suggestions for good lures or baits to take?

Fish talk went on with a debate about sleeping bags, foam pads, whoopie cushions and even a folding stool, the ultimate in whosey equipment. “Do we have everything!” About $50.00 for each person to get into the park for six days and a fishing license, TP, yes in the food pack. Aspirin, band-aids, compass and maps. Make out an itinerary and let’s hit the sauna, we want to be at Prairie Portage by 8:00 a.m.

After a warm shower and sauna, and a restless night’s sleep, we awoke at 5:00 a.m. to find it raining and lightning. We ate breakfast and waited, and waited. By 8:30, the lightning stopped so we hit the lake with a warm and excited spirit, but with a cool rain in our face.

Moose, Newfound and Sucker lakes all looked the same.

By 10:00 a.m. and a little behind schedule, we reached Prairie Portage. We had our dealings with the Canadian customs, and the park ranger who gladly took our U.S. dollars, and reminded us of the dangers of bears and food.

Many things have not changed, for example Bailey Bay. The same two-foot high wall of water poured over the bow of the canoe as we headed north on our adventure. Riding garbage hasn’t changed any either, I am still wet and cold from the trip to Burke Lake. The portage into Burke helped warm and limber my stiff, cold body, and the lunch of ham, cheese and apples made life pleasantly comfortable. A glimpse of blue sky didn’t hurt either.

Upon entering North Bay, we again encountered the ravages of wind and rain. After plowing our way to the north end we found our bodies saying it was time to stop. Besides, it was 4:00 and a nice little camp made an inviting pitch to be our home for the night. Monty was quickly elected as head chef while the rest of us set up camp.

Rich patiently showed us how to use the little gas stoves safely and properly. He then gave us a quick lesson on how to set up the admirably light, dry nylon tent that we had forgotten about on the portages. Because of his constant monotone repeating recital of which pole goes where and when he soon had picked up the well deserved nickname of “Guide.”

Monty served up a hot, tasty beef stew with his own secret spices sprinkled throughout. Then and there, occurred the first silence I had heard all day. It was occasionally broken by the sound of a spoon scraping on the bottom of a bowl, or the muffled “is there any more?” French bread, coffee, tea, and hot chocolate rounded out a wonderful meal.

With dishes done and the bear bag hung, we all settled in to enjoy the moon as it flickered through the passing clouds causing shadows to dance with the silent, dark pines. The music was provided by mother nature, the lake lapping gently at the rock’s edge, the wind gently wisping through the pines, and in the far away a lonesome loon calling a subdued song of loneliness.
As reported in the last issue, thanks to the generosity of over 200 alumni and friends, we exceeded our fund-raising goal for the Charles L. Sommers Lodge remodeling project. In spite of our success, there are still a number of unfunded items that relate to the interior appointments and displays for the Interpretive Center. As indicated in the campaign, a laser-crafted plaque bearing the names of all contributors will be mounted in the Lodge. The SAA Directors have extended to September 4, 1994, the cutoff date for inclusion of your name on that plaque. If you haven’t contributed (or if you simply would like to make an additional tax-deductible donation in 1994), you can still be a part of this very worthwhile project.

SOMMERS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
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