Another Nice Day...

(Ground Hog's Day, 1996, Near Ely)

Another beautiful sunrise in the Quetico-Superior. A little bit of haze in the air, but the sky is clear, the wind is calm, there are no bugs — and the temperature is 50 below! The haze is due to ice crystals and the forecast is for a high of -15 to -25°F. This will be a typical day during the latter half of January, 1996.

The winter of 1995-96 will long be remembered for its nationwide severity — the Ely area included. As of today, over 7 feet of snow has fallen and a new all-time low temperature record (-60°F) for the state was set this morning at Tower, MN.

This area is more fortunate than much of the country because we are more accustomed to cold and snow. Just not this cold for this long a stretch, and not this much snow this early in the winter.

We had a 16-20" snowfall in mid-January, followed by a (rare in this area) strong wind. The snow drifts on Snowbank Lake were about 2 feet high. The foot (or so) of snow in the troughs turned to slush, from water forced above the ice by the weight of the snow. This literally made for tough and dangerous sledding with the high temperature maybe reaching zero.

You can expect to hear reports of significant wildlife casualties — especially for the White-tailed Deer and the Timber Wolf. The four feet of soft, uncrusted snow in the woods makes food-finding extremely difficult. This will be the worst winter in the area for wildlife in quite a while, so the deer population is quite high and the wolf population has reached saturation.

A co-worker asked me if I thought the lakes would be ice-free by Mother's Day weekend. (That's also the opening weekend of the fishing season.) If we don't, it wouldn't be the first time, but there will be a lot of weather — fair or foul — in the next three months. The one sure thing is — the bugs will be back again in the summer.

Crossing Portages Campaign Reaches Goal

Due to the overwhelming generosity of SAA members and friends, Fund Development Chairman Jay Walne, is pleased to announce that the Association's five-year annual giving campaign — Crossing Portages, Sharing the Load — has exceeded its initial goal of $100,000 in contributions and pledges. Over one hundred individuals committed to crossing portages associated with one of four 5-year giving levels: Grand Portage ($2500) - 25%, Horse Portage ($1000) - 20%, Meadows Portage ($500) - 30%, or Prairie Portage ($200) - 25%. These funds will be used to undertake various projects each year through the end of the decade. Supporters to date represent just over one third of our paid and honorary membership, and less than ten percent of our "verified" mailing list. At its mid-winter Executive Committee meeting, the SAA Directors will discuss a second phase of this campaign aimed at recruiting additional contributors. If you haven't yet joined your friends in Sharing the Load, we invite you to do so. Gifts of any size will be put to good use.
**Tidbits on the Sommers Clan**

Harvey Arnold, is actively recruiting summer staff, promoting Northern Tier and promoting the High Adventure Triple Crown Award. Harvey is an active volunteer in the Lake District of the Central Florida Council.

Cyd ('75-80) and Nigel ('77, 79, 80) Cooper, and their three children brought above freezing weather to Ely in mid-January. They took it — and some trout home with them.

Scott Hedges ('85-88) continues to work for the National Audubon Society and is now in Corpus Christi, TX.

Dave Hyink ('66-70) and Jon spent President's Day weekend at Snowbank Lake fishing for lake trout.

**Greg Richter ('92-95) is a student at Iowa State University, Ames, IA.**

**Paul Romanick ('67-69) visited the Base last summer. He is Site Project Manager for BETAC Corp. at Hubart Field, FL. Paul, wife Rita and son David (6) are trying to sell their golf course-side home in Navarre, FL.**

**Jeo Sheagren ('74, 75, 77) entered the John Beargrease Sled Dog Race along the North Shore. Joel said that this being his first money race was the reason his team finished 13th. He also brought his dogs to Ely for the "Voyageur Winterfest." **

**Look for SAA and Northern Tier info on the Internet within www.scouting.org, thanks to SAA and Northern Tier Committee member Paul Schlieve ('71) (schlieve@unt.edu).**

**Robert Walsh, M.S. ('52-53) is actively searching for the "Lost Alumni" of his era. Thanks for the support and updates! Bob has closed his private practice and is now "vacation filling" for other doctors around the country.**

**Jim Sowell ('65-69) was awarded the Silver Beaver on February 15, in recognition of his noteworthy support of Scouting in the Circle Ten Council, Dallas. Congratulations, Jim!**

**Bill Hines (1991) is a practicing emergency medicine in Newcastle, Australia.**

**Bob Banks, 1956-1974 Canoe Base committee chairman and Bob Banks, Jr. ('77-78) Assistant Director have sent in their life memberships. Bob, Sr. was president of the First National Bank of Superior and is now retired, living in Swainsboro, NC. Bob, Jr. lives in Superior and works for Chromaline Corp. in Duluth.**

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**Alumni Association Directors and Officers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director/President (3)*</td>
<td>Dave Hyink</td>
<td>(206) 863-6406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director/Secretary (3)</td>
<td>Butch Diesslin</td>
<td>(218) 365-6904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director (3)</td>
<td>Roy Conrad</td>
<td>(770) 496-0920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director (2)</td>
<td>Zane Beaton</td>
<td>(612) 861-4930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director (2)</td>
<td>John Christiansen</td>
<td>(417) 646-8526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director/President (2)</td>
<td>Barry Bain</td>
<td>(612) 944-5178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director (1)</td>
<td>Lorri Hanson</td>
<td>(503) 744-2814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director (1)</td>
<td>Jay Walne</td>
<td>(901) 278-2633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director (1)</td>
<td>Dave Greenlee</td>
<td>(605) 371-2209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Nigel Cooper</td>
<td>(612) 738-1242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Number in parentheses is years remaining in current term.

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**Program Liaisons**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Bill Spice</td>
<td>National Director of High Adventure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philmont Scout Ranch, BSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cimarron, NM 88714</td>
<td>(505) 376-2281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Sandy Bridges</td>
<td>Director, Northern Tier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National High Adventure Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.O. Box 509</td>
<td>Ely, MN 55731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(218) 365-4811</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Robert LaFortune</td>
<td>Chairman, National High Adventure Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>427 S. Boston #2104</td>
<td>Tulsa, OK 74103-4132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Steve Fossett</td>
<td>Chairman, Northern Tier</td>
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<tr>
<td>National High Adventure Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marathon Securities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401 So. LaSalle Street, Suite 200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago, IL 60605</td>
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</tbody>
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**In Memory Of**

**John Africa, Ardmore, PA.**

Northern Tier Committee Member 1978-1995, and an active and ardent supporter of the Northern Tier National High Adventure Programs. John died suddenly of a heart attack. He is survived by his wife Jean.

**Jane Bradlich, Virginia, MN.**


**Donald L. White, Ottawa, KS.**

He was better known as Judge White, being a retired District Judge of the State of Kansas. Judge White was a ten-time advisor during the years of 1971-1988. Judge White was the advisor of a crew that went to Hudson's Bay in 1973. He was active in the Heart of America Council.

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**Volume 6, Number 1, Reflections** is the official publication of the Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc., P.O. Box 428, 5891 Moose Lake Road, Ely, Minnesota 55731-0428. **Reflections** is published three times a year (Oct., Mar., and July). The Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc. is a non-profit Minnesota corporation. The IRS has determined that the alumni association is an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations to the alumni association are tax deductible. Membership to the Sommers Alumni Association in open to all persons 18 years and older. Association dues are $10 for Annual membership, $25 or more annually for Sustaining membership, or $150 (one time) for Life Membership. The association's dues year begins January 1. MOVING... please notify the alumni association of your new address, phone number, etc. We will include your E-Mail addresses in the member directory. Send your address changes or additions to P.O. Box 428, Ely, MN 55731-0428 or to Butch Diesslin via e-mail at: bdiesslin@vr.cc.mn.us.
President’s Message

As I write this mid-winter message, the floor of my living room is strewn with mounds of cold weather clothing. Mukluks, boots, long underwear, polar fleece, and wool socks are everywhere. Tomorrow my son Jon and I are heading for Ely! It will be a long weekend of ice fishing on Snowbank — a trip we’ve promised ourselves for years.

Now, in spite of the record cold Minnesota weather, just seemed like the right time. Jon is a high school sophomore and there aren’t too many years left before he “leaves the nest.” I finally had hip replacement surgery and I feel like a kid again — almost.

And, like most of you, the pressures of work and volunteer life are all at a level where I need a little “decompression” time. Just like my summer canoe trips, there is a special excitement in the air as I look forward to a return to the Far Northland. It’s a great feeling... but you knew that!

Speaking of great feelings... I’m so very proud of the generous way that the alumni Association have responded to our fund development initiative, Crossing Portages, Sharing the Load. We are now beginning to realize our goal of being able to target combined human and financial resources toward high-leverage projects with relatively short lead times on a more-or-less continuing basis through the remainder of this decade. My personal thanks to all who have chosen to participate.

I’d like to remind everyone of two upcoming opportunities to share some of your time and talents with fellow and future Association members. Like last year, we will again be having an Alumni Work Week at the Ely Base beginning on Memorial Day weekend. Staff training begins on the following weekend. And, as before, the Alumni Association will assume primary responsibility for staffing this event. Please consider participating in one or both of these events.

I continue to enjoy both seeing and hearing from Sommers Alumni. When I travel, I carry our membership roster and try to at least call people when I’m in their area. I encourage each of you to do the same with me whenever you’re in the Seattle/Tacoma area. Why not check your Directory to see if your friends are listed. If they are, give them a call. If they’re not (and you know how to reach them), give them a call or drop them a note. If they’re not receiving Reflections, send us their address and we’ll make sure that they get a copy.

I hope that this message finds each of you eagerly anticipating and planning your next big adventure. To you and yours, I thank you once again for your valued support of our Association and its mission; and wish you all the best for ’96.

Message from Sandy

The record-breaking snow and cold weather has made winter a real challenge. The OKPIK Holiday Stay was well attended again this year. Staff and participants from several states and even a visitor from Sweden. Frank Heyl from Oregon brought his survival training team to the Base in late January. They ran another very successful military survival training program. The training went very well with temperatures down below -40°F, at times. Frank and three of his team are Eagle Scouts. The military participants came from as far away as Fort Rucker in Alabama.

The 1996 summer season looks very good with a near record sign-up for all three Bases. The 1997 pre-season registration is scheduled to begin on the 1st of April. We have had many requests for information and are anticipating a good start for 1997. Remember 1997 is a National Jamboree year so we are anxious to have good pre-season registrations.

The capital projects last year have helped all facets of the program. The new restrooms and trading post changes in the dining hall have proven to be invaluable. The two new first-night cabins that were built by the Alumni team were in full use this past summer. These cabins were necessary and really appreciated. The BSA National Capital projects for 1996 are extensive and include many improvements. One project approved for 1996 is a proposed development plan for both Atikokan and Bissett. The Alumni will be pleased to hear that the Lodge project continues to move along quickly. The heating unit for the Lodge project continues to move along quickly. The heating unit for the Lodge is being installed and should be ready for use this coming Fall.

We have not moved as quickly as we would like on the new programs emphasizing the history of the area. "Portages Through Time" but we continue to look forward to many trips in the future. The two new National Historical Trails — the Base to Grand Portage and the Base to Crane Lake are also going to be some great opportunities.

The Base continues to need seasonal staff. I encourage each of you to look for young adults in your local communities for prospects. We certainly need your help.

The best to all — Why not plan a trip to the Base this year? We look forward to seeing you!

Alumni Work Week — May 25th

The alumni association's second annual designated WORK WEEK will be May 25 - June 2, 1996. This is a time when staff alumni can gather at the Base and help get the place “in shape” for the coming summer. If you come you are assured of having someone else there to work with you and swap "trail tales" as you sweat and swat bugs.

Last year the alumni work crew built two new first night crew cabins. This "sweat equity" on the part of those alumni who participated allowed for close to 1,000 more summer participants. This donation of time effectively doubled the impact of the alumni's cash contributions.

Canoe Trip Opportunity — Join Us

Alumni members interested in joining a canoe trip group; a.k.a. "The Liminiment Brigade," for a trip July 28-August 4, 1996 should contact Butch Diesslin [218] 365-6904, b.dieesslin@vtcc.mn.us].

The "Brigade" will travel along the border through Knife Lake and return through the Man Chain. The "crew" so far includes Butch and Lucy Diesslin, John Oosterhuis and Sally Toll. The party size limit is 9 people.

At this time there are no major projects, such as the first night cabin building, that have been identified. However, between now and the middle of May, there will be a veritable laundry list of projects identified. The hope is that these projects will provide a wide variety, for both larger groups and one or two people.

If you would like to join with the work crew, you can show up at the Base with your sleeping bag, or if you would like a better idea of what the work projects might be, contact Butch Dieesslin sometime after the first of May.
Bissett — Boom and Bust in the Manitoba Bush

by Chuck Rose

Bissett, is a two gas station, one hotel, one grocery store, one pool hall/laundromat/burger joint kind of town as well as home to the Northern Expeditions High Adventure Base, the Northern Tier’s Manitoba “satellite” operation. It’s economy is based on forestry, wild rice harvesting, and tourism — due to the world-class wall-eye fishing in the area.

Bissett was founded during the Eastern Manitoba Gold Rush. In 1911, Duncan Twohearts, a Cree trapper, brought some gold-rich quartz to Major E.A. Pelletier (a former RCMP officer). Such secrets don’t keep well; prospectors flocked into the area. However, nearly all the gold in the area is low grade ore. About four tons of ore must be processed to extract one ounce of gold. As a result, few independent prospectors made fortunes. Abandoned shafts can be found near many canoe routes. Pelletier sold out and headed for Brazil in the 1920s. A few large, equipment-intensive operations started making money when gold prices rose.

A Bissett Story — We’re Boy Scouts, Not Claim Jumpers

by Ted Hingst

I remember being in the Hotel San Antonio with Dennis Wogaman and Tom Chaufant back in ’78. Some backwoods prospector came in to talk with the owner, Bob Shindrake. This guy looked pretty disreputable even to us, and behaved so secretive that we made every effort to eavesdrop that we could. Turned out that he owed Bob a sizable tab and had come in to pay it off. Later, Shindrake showed us why the guy was being so cagey; he had paid him off with raw gold melted down into lumps a little larger than a quarter and about 1/4 inch thick. This character had thought that the three of us looked even more disreputable than him and was worried that we would follow him back to his claim.

Shindrake said he could not get the guy to accept the fact that we were Boy Scouts and not claimjumpers. How the times change, now people mistake me for someone respectable.
Manitoba — with its 100,000 lakes — is a wilderness canoeist delight. Among the attractions for canoeists and those interested in the history of the land are the hand-drawn canoe route maps of Real Berard. In fact, Berard’s maps were one of the reasons that Sommers set up the Northern Expedition’s “satellite base” in Bissett, Manitoba. Several maps include the routes that Scout crews travel, but Berard’s dozen maps cover areas from Hudson’s Bay to the Minnesota border. His artwork, surrounding the routes, mixes subjects such as voyager history, gold mine activity, Indian culture, or natural history. His sources include missionary accounts and Hudson’s Bay Company archives, but more important, trappers, bush pilots, and Cree natives.

Using these maps can be an interesting experience. I’ve been pleasantly surprised to have recognized scenes from the maps such as Lucifer’s Boiler on the Gammon River or Split Rock Gap on the Bloodvein. As noted in the map margins, these maps are not necessarily navigation documents. The Sasaginnigak Canoe Country and Kautigan Route maps were drawn in 1962 was a dry year. The “Sas” map was drawn to fit the Bloodvein River, from the Ontario border to Lake Winnipeg. As a result, north on this map is towards the upper right-hand corner. When I worked in the area, the guides would often find “modifications” to the map’s routes (whether due to changes in water levels or portages obscured by blowdowns). The Little Grand Rapids Canoe Routes map includes a sketch of a Blue Ribbon Baking Powder can and explains that local trappers use the recipe on the back to make bannock (a flying pan bread). One year, several guides started searching for the cans. I found one on a portage to Black Lake but … it was a new design, without the recipes. The next one I found had the recipes, but it was the only old fashion can we found that year. Several crew members also took home these souvenirs.

In addition to being a map maker, Berard is an award-winning artist, ice sculptor, and short-film animator. I was lucky enough to have tea with him in Winnipeg a few years ago. He is currently drawing a map of the Churchill River (Missinippi to the Cree) in northern Saskatchewan seeing the same landmarks as Sigurd Olson described in his book The Lonely Land. “Sig must have gone during a high water year,” he told me. Berard continues to explore rivers for trapper routes and old fur trade sites.

Creating these documents allows Berard to be an artist, explorer, naturalist, and voyageur. He enjoys preserving the spirit of the north by recording local lore and history which is left out of textbooks. Use of these maps at the Bissett base has made them part of Sommer’s heritage. In teaching Scouts about the north country, these map’s pictures and sometimes poetic words are invaluable.

Berard’s illustrated canoe maps are available from the Manitoba government. Write for details: Surveys & Mapping Branch, 1007 Century Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3H 0W4.
LOST ALUMNI (cont.)

SPROAT DAVID MN 1968-69
SPROUT JERRY KS 1975
STALEY ROBERT SD 1955-56
STRAHMF. WILLIAM TX 1986-88
STROUBUSH DENNIS MN 1985
STRUCK BOB IL 1981
STUEMPERT BUD MN 1977
SULLIVAN GAYLA CO 1966
SWAILS MARK IA 1969
SWAILS TOM MN
SWANSON DAVID MN 1975
SWANSON HALE MN 1956
SWANSON JOHN CA 1954-56,62
SWANSON LEIF WY 1983-84
SWARD RIC 1970
TABLER ALAN OR 1978
TATMAN PETE TX 1963-66

TELFORD CLAIR TN 1968
THEIS JOHN
THOE JAMES MN 1955
THOMPSON ANTHONY AR 1977-78
THOMPSON DANNY AR 1975
TIERNEY RICHARD IA 1956
TOLBERT LYNN KS 1978-80
TROEHLER GREG IN 1992
TURMAN RICH ND 1975
TUTHILL JOHN SD 1975-76
VARIS ROY ME 1992
VASEY STEVE MO 1979
VENZKE EDWARD MN 1988,92
VOKATY DWIGHT MN 1966
VOUK BOB NE 1962
VOWLES JEREMY 1991
WAGNER STEVE NE 1984
WALL DON MN 1970
WALLS RON MN 1956-69
WANDSTROM EDMAR 1953
WARREN BRAD VA 1975
WARREN MICHAEL OK 1968-69
WATERS BROWNING OK 1968-69
WEATHERSTONE SCOTT MN 1986-88
WEISSELBERG ED 1953
WEISSINGER RON TX 1970
WELCH CHARLIE
WERMAGER MARC MN 1962-64
WERTZ JEREMY KS 1994
WEYER GARY MN 1978
WHIPPS JOHN OK 1969
WHISTLER JOHN MN 1968-70
WHISTON KEN OK 1966
WHISTON DAVID TX 1969
WHITE DAVID 1969
WHITE ROLLIE 1963
WIDNEY TOM OK 1970
WILHELMSSON MIKAEL 1987
WILLETTST. DOUGLAS 80,84,
WILLIAMS ANNE TX 1976
WILLIAMS B. M. 1965,68 MEDIC
WILSON JAMES KS 1968-69
WITTLIEF TODD MI 1983
WOLFE HAL MI 1980
WUNDERLICH STEVE NE 1980-81
WYATT PAUL MN 1969-70
WYMAN BRUCE 1970
ZIMMERMAN ROGER MN 1963

Scenes From Our Last Reunion

Photos by Roy Conradi
Help Needed for Staff Training Week, June 5-12

The 1996 summer season at Northern Tier will officially begin with the annual staff training week, June 5-12. The staff training will be coordinated and conducted primarily by members of the Northern Tier National High Adventure Committee (and the alumni association) — Dr. Bob Christie, Dr. Dick Shank, Mike Holdgrafer, Bob Cary, Butch Diesslin, Dr. Lou Kleager and others. Having the committee members volunteer to lead the training allows for year to year continuity, and it frees up the senior seasonal staff members to prepare and plan for the incoming crews.

In recent years almost half of the staff members have been in their first-year on the staff. This high percentage of new staff means there is a relative shortage of peer trainers. If you have some time, and would like to share the expertise and experience that you gained while you were on the staff, you are invited to join in the training effort.

Training is a mix of classroom sessions, demonstrations and hands-on skills training.

The greatest need for additional training assistance is with the hands-on skills training — canoeing, portaging, cooking, camping, etc. The closer to one-on-one we can get the better. Of course this might mean having to spend a night or two in the woods.

If you are interested in joining the 1996 staff training please contact Butch Diesslin for more details.

Jane Bradlich, Wife of Henry, Passes Away January 10

Jane A. Bradlich, 81, died January 10, 1996, in Virginia, Minnesota. Jane was the wife of Henry, who served on the Base staff from 1950 to 1987 and the mother of Bill (1957-63). She lived at the Canoe Base with Henry from 1976 to 1983.

Jane was born in Eveleth, MN, and grew up there, moving to Leonidas, MN, in 1920. She was a graduate of Eveleth High School, Eveleth Junior College and St. Cloud Teachers' College. She taught school in Long Prairie, MN and East Port Orchard, WA. She married Henry on December 31, 1940. She was an insurance secretary from 1956 to 1976, at First National Bank of Eveleth.

She was a member of Hope Community Presbyterian Church in Virginia, was an organist for the Presbyterian Church in Eveleth for 12 years and was a secretary for the Esther Crandall Church Circle.

She was a member of VPW, American Legion Auxiliary, Women's Business and Professional Club, Eveleth Faculty Wives, Eveleth Women's Club and the American Association of University Women.

SOMMERS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 428
ELY, MINNESOTA 55731

Address Correction Requested
Scenes From Our Last Reunion

Photos by Roy Conradi