



REFLECTIONS



NORTHERN TIER NATIONAL HIGH ADVENTURE

Wilderness Castle Awaits Paddlers Near Atikokan

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 one ripple on the water's surface. Slowly, the huge logs of Jimmy McQuat's Castle in the wilderness came into focus. 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 20 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.

Jimmy McQuat, born in Scotland in 1878, came to Canada in the late 1890's. He began trapping around the White Otter area in 1903 and lived there the rest of his life. In addition to hauling around one foot diameter, 35 foot long logs during the building process, (Jimmy was only about 5'7" and 145 lbs.), he used levers, winches, scaffolding and certainly ingenuity to craft his dream house.

Why would someone, a back-country trapper, spend 17 years building a castle, 30 miles and 70 portages from the nearest town? An often repeated story which I have seen in print and heard while working at Atikokan in 1984 is that he built it for a woman

back in Scotland who never came to him. It is romantic, but false. Here, in his own words, as recorded by C.L. Hodson in 1914, is the true story ...

"Years ago — yes, it was a long time now — we were just boys ey 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 in 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? Ye

couldn't call it a shack ... an' I build it all by myself.

Jimmy died in 1920 by accidental drowning. His grave is next to his home in the beautiful wilderness. Volunteer and government help have maintained the castle over the years. In the Atikokan area, he is remembered as a wilderness character akin to Dorothy Milter or Bennie Ambrose.

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



Sommers Alumni Needed for 1997 National Jamboree

We're looking for a "few good alumni" who would like to spend some time helping with the National High Adventure Exhibit at the 1997 National Boy Scout Jamboree at Ft. A.P. Hill, Virginia.

Volunteers need to be registered members of the BSA, in good health (BSA physical required), and willing to work long (but fun) hours. Adult staff will also be responsible for their trans-

portation to and from the Jamboree as well as paying the adult staff fee. If this sounds like you, please contact **Dave Hyink** to express your interest.

Tidbits on the Sommers Clan

Jim Andre, M.D. '50 lives in St Paul, MN and has maintained contact with **Dave Damberg** '50, who also lives in St. Paul and is a Health Care Consultant.

Daniel Golding '87-89, is a Mechanical Engineer, is in the Navy, and is living in Auburn, AL. Goldida@eng.auburn.edu

Pete Hanish '89 recently finished his PhD in Electrical Engineering and has accepted a position with Texas Instruments in Dallas, TX. He and his brother **Nate** '95 canoed the Sipsey R. in Bankhead National Forest, AL when Pete was enroute to TX from MI.

Harlan Hanson '63-66, '79 is Director of Technology Coordination for the MN Dept. of Economic Security. He and his wife Karen live in Mora, MN and enjoy tandem cycling. hhanson@ngwmail.des.stat.e.mn.us

Roger Dellinger '80-81 (Dellinger@AOL.com), found 'lost guide' **Marc Wermager** '62-64 at a

'Canoe Fest' in Minneapolis; where Marc was promoting Atikaki Outfitters in Red Lake, ON; which he operates, uses the same general area serviced by the No. Tier Bissett base.

Wade Herbranson '86-92, and his wife Paula are now the on-site managers of the Vermilion Community College's Outdoor Learning Center, on Fall Lake between Winton and the Garden Lake Bridge.

Jack Olson '94 hopes to return as a staff member for the 1997 season.

Rodger Peterson '58 related his heroism, and three cracked ribs, in protecting his canoe from damage on a trip in 1994. Rodger hoped to join the "1996 Liniment Brigade" but is getting married the day before that trip. Our best to Rodger and his wife to be.

Many thanks to **Dr. Bob Welsh, M.D.** '52-53 for his assistance in finding some of his fellow staff members of the Region Ten Sommers Canoe Base.

Hedrick Memorial Library

As the final renovation of the Charles L. Sommers Lodge takes place, the relocated Hedrick Memorial Library has a new and very appropriate home. The Library was formed in the late 1950's in memory of **Robert Hedrick**, a dedicated Region Ten staff member and canoe guide. Through the years, his father, George Hedrick, and family have faithfully supported the Library.

Upon the death of George Hedrick, additional donations were made in his memory. These gifts will be used to complete the Library. The plans for completion include: temperature control, shelves and

cabinets for books and artifacts, display space for both historical and contemporary maps, secure storage for rare books and materials, and study and research space.

The Library is dedicated to the historic preservation of the Region Ten Canoe Trails, the Charles L. Sommers Canoe Base and the Northern Tier National High Adventure Programs. The specialties also include the history of the Canoe Country of the Boundary Waters and the Quetico Provincial Park of Ontario.

A casual reading library for the staff is also provided.

Donations are welcome and greatly appreciated.

Alumni Association Directors and Officers

Director/President (3)*	Dave Hyink	(206) 863-6406
Director/Vice President (2)	Barry Bain	(612) 944-5178
Director/Secretary (3)	Butch Diesslin	(218) 365-6904
Director/Newsletter (3)	Roy Conradi	(770) 496-0920
Treasurer	Nigel Cooper	(612) 738-1242
Director (3)	Patrick Cox	(214) 342-8786
Director (3)	David Greenlee	(605) 371-2209
Director (3)	Jay Walne	(901) 278-2633
Director (3)	Wade Herbranson	(218) 365-3162
Director (2)	Robert Welsh	(206) 454-5628
Director (2)	Zane Beaton	(612) 861-4930
Director (2)	John Christiansen	(417) 646-8526
Director (1)	Mark Norstrom	(614) 833-9219

*Number in parentheses is years remaining in current term.

Program Liaisons

Mr. Bill Spice	National Director of High Adventure Philmont Scout Camp, BSA Cimarron, NM 88714 (505) 376-2281
Mr. Sandy Bridges	Director, Northern Tier National High Adventure Program P.O. Box 509 Ely, MN 55731 (218) 365-4811
Mr. Robert LaFortune	Chairman, National High Adventure Committee 427 S. Boston #2104 Tulsa, OK 74103-4132
Mr. Steve Fossett	Chairman, Northern Tier National High Adventure Committee Marathon Securities 401 So. LaSalle Street, Suite 200 Chicago, IL 60605

IN MEMORY OF

KATHY CERNY
PARLEY TUTTLE
JERRY PITTMAN

Volume 6, Number 2. *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., Feb., 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 is 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 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 b.diesslin@vr.cc.mn.us.

President's Message

Earlier this year around commencement time, my thoughts drifted back to my own high school graduation — some 30 years ago this month. Fondly recalled was not the graduation ceremony itself, but of what took place afterwards. Following the obligatory parties and socializing, my dad loaded me and my footlocker into his pick-up and drove me to Webster, SD where I caught the “midnight train to Minneapolis.” Too excited to sleep, my thoughts wandered to the unknown adventures ahead. The beautiful sunrise I witnessed as the train neared its destination would be the first of many I would enjoy on what would become a continuing life-long journey.

A cab ride later found me boarding a bus for Virginia (Minnesota, that is) and some serious “sack time.” I was awakened by the bus driver as he called out “Moose Lake” and thought to myself — “how convenient” — until I realized we were stopping at the town of Moose Lake, MN enroute.

In those days, there was connecting bus service from Virginia to Ely if one was willing to spend a considerable portion of his life in and around Virginia bus station waiting for the evening bus to Ely. The long layover notwithstanding, it was an eventful trip for this Dakota “flatlander” as the bus pushed its way deeper and deeper into the Arrowhead country. My seatmate was a young chap named **John Herrick** — who, to this day, guides smallmouth trips out of his base on Moose Lake near Hibbard's Creek. He spent most of the trip trying to convince me that the best place to work in Ely was at

Canadian Waters, Inc.

My final “transfer” came at the Ely bus stop in front of the Piggly Wiggly Grocery (now Vertin's Restaurant) where truck driver, **Al Reishus** (now **Dr. Allan Reishus**), took me the rest of the way. After an *unforgettable* trip to the Base, I concluded that Al must have been some type of “conservationist” — since he conserved tires by making most of the trip down the Moose Lake road on two wheels!

Finally, I had arrived! And that arrival marked the beginning of a tremendous period of growth for me as an individual. As I subsequently continued that journey, I would be given responsibility (almost beyond my years), travel new trails, meet new and interesting people, face new and exciting challenges, make career decisions, and make many life-long friends. It's a journey that continues to this day.

Similar journeys began for dozens of young people this past June as the 1996 Staff descended upon Ely. I am particularly “tuned-in” this year as I witnessed first-hand both the excitement and the apprehension of one of my own Explorer Scouts, **Sean Sessions**, as he headed to the Base for what I know will be the time of his life. He richly deserves the opportunities which lie ahead. The fond memories of that time in my own life make me excited for him — and pleased to know that we continue to offer that experience to young people today.

As I recall this tale, it occurs to me that each of you must have had a similar experience. Sit back, reflect and enjoy. Hope you had a great summer!



Message from Sandy

End of an Era!! I received a letter from Grumman stating that as of the first of July 1996, they no longer make canoes. Fifty years and they are closing up shop. The first Grumman canoes were built in 1946. The aluminum canoes are now less than 4% of the national market. We all have mixed emotions about aluminum canoes but now it looks like they will be a thing of the past. I can only wonder if John Swanson had something to do with their demise. By the way, there is still one or two around (not in service though) that were painted green — anyone remember those? They were painted prior to 1960, only 14 years or so after the first were made!

Outgoing BSA President, **Norm Augustine**, visited the Ely Base during the first week

in April. He and **Bill Spice**, National Director of High Adventure, arrived on a beautiful day and enjoyed the weather and the new construction at the Base. The next day was a white-out condition with over a foot of snow.

All in all, 1996 looks like a great season, several new capital projects and the prospects of a great season at each base. The Bissett Base will have a new fishing program this year and the Atikokan Base has both water and electricity — quite a step up from before.

We are looking forward to you coming up to see the new projects, including the new gateway at the Ely Base, and hopefully to take a trip in your canoe country.

NESA Gives Voyageur Carving to Sommers



Through the generosity of the National Eagle Scout Association (NESA), a wood-carving of a French Voyageur with an Eagle perched on his pack now stands under the covered portion of the main entrance to the Charles L. Sommers Lodge. Carved by Two Harbors, MN artist **John Gage**, the statue stands nearly seven feet tall, and will be seen and enjoyed by many future generations of Scouts and Scouters. We thank NESA for this wonderful addition to the Lodge

New Directory Mailed

The 1996 edition of the alumni association members was mailed to all members in good standing. These directors include the names and addresses of all members in our database. This new directory was mailed during the first week of June. The directory is available to non-members for the nominal fee of \$10 —

which also gets you a free one year membership.

E-Mail Addresses

Would you like your e-mail address in the association member directory? Send your address to P.O. Box 428, Ely, MN 55731-0428; or to Butch Diesslin at b.diesslin@vr.cc.mn.us.



Charles L.

Sommers Alumni Association, Inc.

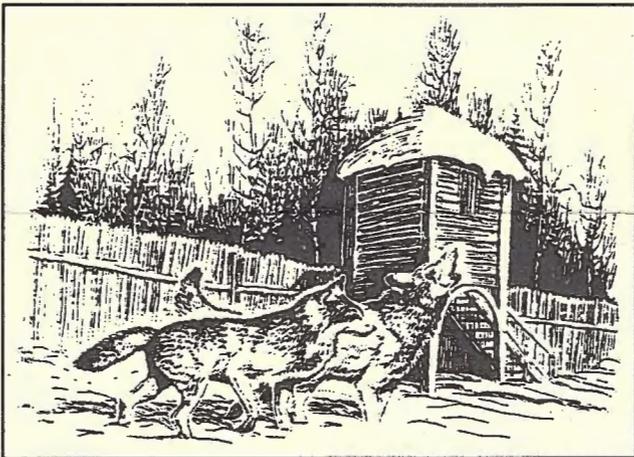
P.O. Box 428 Ely, MN 55731-0428

1996 SAA Holiday Greeting Card Sale

Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association is now taking orders for the 1996 edition of our annual Holiday Greeting Cards. Through the use of these cards, SAA members and supporters have the opportunity to send holiday greetings to their friends, business associates, and fellow scouts, and to send a message of their commitment to programs of Northern Tier High Adventure, BSA. Orders will be shipped in November.

This year's card will feature a Bob Cary drawing of "Gateway", with highest quality thermography printing on premium cards made of recycled paper. The inside message is HOLIDAY GREETINGS. The back of the card carries a message about Northern Tier High Adventure. This is a distinctive and very handsome greeting card. The cards come 25 per package including envelopes.

A limited number of 1993, 1994 and 1995 cards featuring the "Lodge", "Hanson House" and "Canoe Yard" are also available at a discounted price, while supplies last. A special series package, including all four years will be available at a special price while supplies last.





The person sending this card has contributed to Sommers Alumni Association's efforts to promote character development and outdoor skills through wilderness canoeing programs at Northern Tier National High Adventure, BSA.



Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc., Box 428, Ely, MN 55731.
A Non-Profit Organization

"GATEWAY"
Original Art by Bob Cary
Series #4

CHARLES L. SOMMERS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INC.

Holiday Greeting Card Sale

c/o Dan Wangerin, 715 Barberry Place • West Bend, WI 53095

Quantity

_____	1996 Cards - Gateway	x \$25.00 = _____
_____	1995 Cards - Canoe Yard	x \$20.00 = _____
_____	1994 Cards - Hanson House	x \$20.00 = _____
_____	1993 Cards - The Lodge	x \$20.00 = _____
_____	Series - One Package Each of All Four	x \$80.00 = _____
	Enclosed, a tax-deductible gift to the Alumni Association for 1996.	_____
	Shipping: FREE	TOTAL _____

Ship To:

Annual Meeting Held July 27 at Canoe Base

The Annual Meeting of the membership of the Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc. was held at the Charles L. Sommers National High Adventure Base, near Ely, MN on July 27, 1996. This being a non-reunion year, no activities (other than the business meeting) were planned.

Proxy statements were mailed to all members in good standing. There were 17 members present and approximately 100 properly executed proxies — constituting a quorum.

Barry Bain and **Zane Beaton** reported that the membership of the association is 326, of which 229 are life memberships and 32 are Honorary memberships.

Members were reminded to order their miniature of the paddle brand paddles, for display in the Lodge. If you need an order form or have any questions, contact Barry Bain.

Everyone was encouraged to submit articles, pictures, drawings, etc. for the newsletter.

The board was expanded to 12 members and elections were held for three positions for expiring terms and three new positions. Elected were **Patrick Cox** (3-year term); **David Greenlee** (3-year term); **Jay Walne** (3-year term); **Mark Nordstrom** (1-year term); **Robert Walsh** (2-year term); and **Wade Herbranson** (3-year term).

Bob Oliva highlighted the additional renovations completed on the Lodge since the 1995 annual meeting. The old wainscoting in the main room of the Lodge has been removed, insulation and heating pipes have been installed and new wainscoting is in place. Screens and storm windows are being installed. The remodeling carpentry in the Hedrick Library has been completed. Special thanks were expressed to **Bob Renner** and current staff members for re-glazing windows. **Bob** and **Dick Hall** were commended for their craftsmanship.

Allan Batterman and

Butch Diesslin reported on the activities of the Northern Tier staff training week. They thanked the members of the alumni association for their assistance in improving the staff training — both directly and indirectly. Alumni members are invited to assist with the staff training in 1997 and in coming years. The 1997 staff training week will be held the second week of June.

Jay Walne reported that in excess of \$100,000 in pledges have been received for the "Crossing Portages" annual giving campaign.

The alumni association provided a packet of information to each crew this summer as they returned to the base from their trips. The packets included a welcome back letter from **Dave Hyink**, a back issue of *Reflections*, alumni membership information, Triple Crown Award information, a High Adventure

Base seasonal staff application, and an alumni association Christmas Card order form.

The concept of the alumni association providing current staff with incentive items — maps, a wooden canoe paddle, Voyageur clothing, etc., was discussed. Most of those present supported the concept. The annual cost would be about \$3,000. The concept will be explored further.

Allan R. Batterman was presented the 1996 Hedrick Memorial Volunteer Award for



exemplary volunteer service to the Northern Tier National High Adventure programs.

Zane Beaton reported that a Minnesota chapter of the alumni association is being formed. The goal is to have get-togethers for the Sommers alumni in the Twin Cities area. The association supports regional activities of its members.

President **Dave Hyink** referred to the meetings, reports and business to indicate the viability of the alumni association and its positive impact on the Northern Tier National High Adventure Programs. Dave went on to say that although we have accomplished much, there are still many more things which can be done. He thanked everyone for their support and also requested their ongoing assistance.

Minnesota Metro Chapter Established

Alumni Association members from the Minnesota Metro area (Minneapolis, St. Paul, and surrounding suburbs) met September 18 to establish a local chapter of the Alumni Association. Twelve alumni association members, including one new member attended the meeting in Eden Prairie: **Barry Bain**, **Nigel Cooper**, **Zane Beaton**, **Don Richard**, **Roger Dellinger**, **Mike Lynch**, **Jerry Cox**, **Bob Kohns**, **Eric Peterson**, **Jim Guldán**, **Fred King**, and

Rodger Peterson. The meeting was informal with all members sharing stories from their days at the canoe base. The chapter will be primarily a social group, getting together to share stories, to canoe local lakes, or to plan (or at least dream about) future canoe trips great and small. Other activities were also discussed which will be considered as participation in the local chapter grows including: supporting the Alumni Association's annual work weekend, establishing a chapter work

weekend, assisting the canoe base program with promoting the program and recruiting new staff, developing a mentoring program for today's trail staff as they begin new careers, and many other good ideas.

Future meetings will be approximately every other month. The next meeting will be November 13 at Margarita Murphy's, 1690 Woodlane Drive in Woodbury. For more information about the next meeting call **Nigel Cooper** at (612) 738-1242.

BWAC Bears: A New Strategy

By Cory Godfrey Kolodji

Folks, these SWCA bears are just about the worst food-stealin', lazy, moochin', welfare bears in the whole north woods. The traditional method of dealing with them has been to hang our food packs high and well. However, Charlie's is always on the cutting edge of canoe camping advanced techniques and this coming year will be implementing a revolutionary new

bear control method. It's based on sound scientific theory (rather than boring facts) as taught in Mr. K's EZ Biology Class in Chisholm, MN.

Ever notice how those bears just love them unicycles? So, Charlie Crews are throwing away their ropes and pulleys, the Bay Post is issuing unicycles. You just lean that unicycle up against your food packs and

sleep easy. Bears have always chosen unicycles over dried potatoes in every known scientific study. In the morning, it may take some looking to find the unicycle as the tracks usually cross several times. You don't need to worry about disturbing the bears as they are sleeping soundly and happily after an exhausting night's ride.

Charlie Crews Greeting "HOL-RY" Started In '50's

A number of the friends of Northern Tier who have not been on a canoe trip through one of the bases have inquired about the origin and correct spelling of **Hol-Ry**[®]. This has become the salutation used by "Charlie Crews" when they meet, with the appropriate response being **Red Eye!** I have seen various spellings used over the years: **Hol-Rye**; **Hol Rye**; **Holrye**, to name a few.

Hol-Ry[®] was the registered trade name for a rye cracker made by Zinsmaster Baking Co. of St. Paul, MN. This cracker was a regional competitor of **Ry Krisp**[®], and to my knowledge the registered trademark is no longer being used. Zinsmaster Baking Co. was purchased by Metz Baking Co. during the late 1970's or early 1980's. Metz, in turn, sold their cracker division to another bakery. My information is the purchaser was a baking company

in Duluth, MN.

According to **Bob "Red" Renner** (1951, 1956-58), **Hol-Ry**[®] was being used as a lunch item in the early 1950's, by what was then the Region Ten Canoe Trails. Red doesn't recall the use of **Hol-Ry**[®] as a salutation in 1951, but recalls that its use was common

when he returned to the staff in 1956.

The lunch drink of that era was an artificially flavored, red-colored, fruit drink — the most common flavor being cherry. This drink picked up the nickname "**Red Eye**," probably from the use of the term in the saloons of the

matinee westerns of the 1940's and 1950's.

You can be assured that if someone greets you with a **Hol-Ry**[®] — you can be pretty well assured they have had some affiliation with the Northern Tier program bases. The reply back should be "**Red Eye!**"

All 1996 annual dues paying members and life members have been sent a Hol-Ry sticker. Additional stickers are available by sending an addressed business-size (#10) envelope with stamp, to the Alumni Association, Box 428, Ely, MN 55731-0428.

Hol-Ry![®]

Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc., P.O. Box 428, Ely, MN 55731-0428

4th Annual Greeting Card Features Gateway

The fourth in the series of the Association's popular annual Greeting Card can now be ordered. (Order form in this issue). The 1996 card is a **Bob Cary** pen and ink drawing featuring the Bases' new "Gateway" and two wolves.

As in previous cards, there is a message on the back about SAA. The cards, in high-quality thermography, are suitable for mailing to business associates, friends and fellow scouters. By using SAA Holiday Greeting Cards the sender is relaying a

message about his commitment to scouting and Northern Tier programs.

In addition to this year's card, there is a limited supply available of the first three cards in the series, The Lodge, Hanson House and Canoe Yard.

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