



# REFLECTIONS

NORTHERN TIER NATIONAL HIGH ADVENTURE



## Rendezvous '98: Looking back...

by Dave Greenlee

Our 75th Anniversary reunion is behind us, but the warm feelings live on. For me, it was like being on a guide's trip, where everyone seemed to know just what needed to be done and then pitched in without anybody needing to ask. I would like to express my appreciation to everyone who helped make the weekend a success. It was a very special time.

Thank you to Winnie Renner, who faithfully gathered the registrations and raffle tickets and kept the paperwork straight. To Nigel Cooper, who paid all the bills, caught all our income, and saw to it that we stayed "revenue neutral or a little bit better." To Butch Diesslin, who in the midst of a busy summer, had time to locate the High School Auditorium as a rain-out alternative (happily, not necessary), and who identified fellow professor Chuck Wick, the owner of Sig Olson's writing shack and property at Listening Point. Butch's organizational skills are an inspiration. Thanks to Mr. Wick, who graciously hosted private tours to Sig's special places. Thank you Mike McMahon, for helping to organize several canoe trips that were taken before and after the reunion, and for taking the initiative to provide last minute travel planning assistance in the face of an airline strike. To Larry Whitmore, who designed and commissioned some beautiful commemorative Russell knives. (There are just three left from the 50 that were made.) To Ray Mattson, who designed a beautiful T-shirt with a picture of the lodge and the faces of Base Directors in the smoke curling up from the chimney. (If you are one who ordered a shirt and haven't received it yet, please contact me. We also have a few polo shirts left.) To Linnea Renner, who organized childcare during the banquet. To Chuck Rose, who came up with the idea to invite Sam Cook as our banquet speaker, and who took care of invitations to some special guests.



Butch Diesslin presents Ed Chapin with Chapin's Pond award. SAA President Dave Hyink watches in background at left.

Thank you also for helping to organize the tours to Sig Olson's. Nice work, Chuck.

And to Sam Cook - what can I say about Sam, his stories and his slides. Sam told us of a fourteen year-old kid who came to the Base because a Scoutmaster in Kansas took the time to organize a provisional crew of kids who hardly knew each other before they went in the woods. Sam related the feelings of that kid who went on a canoe trip with no prior knowledge of the north woods and with little expectation of a wilderness experience. He described the things a fourteen year-old of the sixties would remember, smashing bread, packing PBJ in a friction-top can, and sitting on a log and then "turtling" when the huge Duluth pack put him on his back. He described a serious case of hero-worship for a guide named Gerry McKay (guides are so, so c-o-o-o-o-l). While his stories were entertaining, it was clear that Sam had done some serious research, and had located slides from his crew and advisor, and had a profound message. Red Renner observed that Sam reminded us all of the reasons we chose to spend our summers guiding canoe trips,

and why we continue to help the Base all these years later. Canoe trips have a very special effect on children. Sam's stories, his beautiful nature pictures, and the pictures of him with his wife and children enjoying the woods, all say that Sam understands what the Sommers Alumni are all about, and that he shares our feelings.

Thank you Cherie Bridges, for donating Sandy's canoe in a raffle designed to bolster the Training Fund, and for sharing your thoughts with us at the banquet. I will always always think of you and Sandy when "messaging about in a boat." When master canoe builder Joe Seliga drew the name of our friend Bob Welch, we all celebrated that Sandy's canoe would have a good home in Bellevue, WA.

To Cory Kolodji, who came as a Voyageur, and who offered up beaver-tail soup or some such, to anyone who chose to banter with him in character. The kids also enjoyed the tomahawk throw and Cory's playful antics. Thanks go to Eric Mase, whose birch bark canoe building demonstration was entertaining and informative. Special thanks to Barbara Cary Hall, who shared her gift of music with

us, and who drew out the musicians among us first by letter of invitation, and later by organizing all the musical events, a mainstay of the canoe trip experience and of our rendezvous. We even got Jeff (Gossman) Kahill to join us for a short time, in between gigs at the Renaissance Fair. I'm sorry I missed most of the music, but I did get a chance to listen to Ron Miles, as he sang a few licks late Sunday night in between the raucous singing of Barry Bain and Roger Clapp at the other end of the Dining Hall. Ah, memories. To Sheila Christiansen, who volunteered to help in the kitchen, and to seasonal staffers Brian Buhl, Eric Dobry, Charles Kirkland, Jeff Kracht, Doug Ramsey, Sarah Swain, Lion Templin, and Liz Vollmer, who stayed on to feed us and keep the Base operating. Everything was great. Finally, I want to thank Pat Cox, who organized the entire raffle, who checked everyone in and kept the records straight, and who spent most of his time handling logistics at the Base. The capper was when he volunteered to organize Rendezvous 2000. Pat, I just hope I can be as helpful to you as you were to us this year.

I might have thought it was just me who had a great time, had I not gotten letters from Barb Cary Hall, Don Christensen, John Thurston, and Bert Hyde. I was glad to hear that Barb was happy with the music program and with the reunion in general, after I almost screwed up the published schedule. Don guided me as a scout in 1965, and he has always been my hero - imagine getting a special thank you note from him. John had been a scout in my dad's troop, and he brought me to the Base as a wide-eyed sixteen-year-old in 1966. I hadn't seen him for over 30 years but it was as if no time had passed. Bert and I had worked together at the Base, and spent some very special moments

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# President's Message

by Dave Hyink

The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Rendezvous was predicted to be BIG and it was! While the Northwest Airlines pilots' strike ruined the Labor Day weekend plans of many of our nation's air travelers, it merely altered them for many Rendezvous 98! attendees. I was impressed with the "Charlie Guide" ingenuity as Sommers Alumni used Amtrak, Greyhound, Hertz, private aircraft and "just plain persistence" to converge on the Ely base. Their efforts were both appreciated and rewarded.

For me, it was wonderful to see so many good friends having such a wonderful time. My only regret was that I didn't seem to have enough time to really sit down and visit with everyone. A personal highlight took place on Friday evening when **Ron Miles** picked up a guitar and sang a few songs. It had been over thirty years since I had enjoyed Ron's music. I won't let that happen again! My thanks to **Barb Cary Hall**, **Larry Whitmore**, **Jeff Dahl**, **Randy Schwalbach**, **Ron Miles** and **Roger Clapp** (harmonica) for playing at a wonderful evening of music and story-telling. Tales of bears, Sparky the cook, Pooh Bah Worms, "Fitzers" and "hiding from Henry" were great.

The annual members meeting was well attended and full of the spirit of the Far Northland. In addition to celebrating our past success and sharing our future vision, SAA members were treated to a wonderful retrospective on the value of the International Staff Program by **Tero Mustonen** who represented the many Sommers Alumni from Finland. We also heard about the Seasonal Staff Scholarship Program, a joint effort between the Northern Tier National High Adventure Committee and the SAA to provide educational scholarship opportunities to returning seasonal staff. "Jackpine" **Bob Cary** was recognized (with a standing ovation) for his service and support to the Base. It was a rare moment as Bob was temporarily at a loss for words!

Dinner at the Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort was the single biggest sit-down meal they had ever served. Officially they served 222 people, but I think there were only 221 chairs because I always seemed to be sitting in someone else's. It was an evening of celebration, reflection and renewal. We celebrated not only seventy-five years of serving Scouts with the very best wilderness adventures available anywhere, but also presented two George Hedrick Volunteer Service Awards to **Ed Chapin** and **Gene Felton** for decades of service to the Base.

Outdoor writer **Sam Cook** did a masterful job of describing his trip as the cook on Crew 702C in 1964 with guide **Gerry McKay**. For those of us who have ever taken to the trail with paddle and pack – either as a Scout or as a guide/interpreter – he faithfully captured the essence of every trip we have ever taken! His reflections reinforced what we have known all along – that the guide/interpreter is an essential and critical part of the wilderness experience for Scout crews.

It was a bitter-sweet evening for **Cherie Bridges** and members of her family as she spoke so eloquently about Sandy's belief that he was but one "steward" of a program that was much bigger than any individual. That he was entrusted with this stewardship role, not only by his predecessors, but also by the many generations of Scouts yet to partake in the wonders of the Far Northland – a theme also echoed by **Gene Felton** in the forward to his book *A Diamond in the North: A History of Scout Adventure in the North Country 1923-98*. Cherie called on canoe-maker **Joe Seliga** to draw the ticket that won Sandy's personal Seliga, which she and the family donated to help raise money for the Sandy Bridges Memorial Training Fund.

Together, **Cherie** and **Sam** ever-so-clearly reminded us of the importance of where we've been, where we're going, and why it's important. Thanks to both of them.

As the evening wound down, it was time to go home. For many, that meant the Yugoslav National Home! Yes, generations of "Charlie's Best" jammed the "Home" for some late-night revelry, conversation and dancing. How many stopped at the Garden Lake Bridge later, I couldn't say.

Base tours, Voyageur encampments, birchbark canoe making, and trips to Sig Olson's Listening Point and writing shack rounded out the event. If you're sorry you missed it (and a I hope you are), take heart, we're set to do it again over the Labor Day weekend in the year 2000! Mark your calendars now.

My personal thanks go to the organizing committee for Rendezvous 98! **Dave Greenlee**, **Barb Cary Hall**, **Chuck Rose**, **Ray Mattson**, **Cory Kolodgi**, **Pat Cox**, and **Mike McMahon**. Thanks also to **Doug Hirdler** and the Northern Tier Staff for all of their excellent efforts in hosting this event.

My best wishes go out to each and every one of you. Please let us hear from you. Together, we'll make the next seventy-five the best yet!

## Alumni Association Directors and Officers\*

Director/President (3)**	Dave Hyink	(253) 863-6406
Director/Vice President (2)	Barry Bain	(612) 944-5178
Director/Secretary (3)**	Butch Diesslin	(218) 365-6904
Treasurer	Nigel Cooper	(612) 738-1242
Director (3)	Roy Conradi	(770) 972-8115
Director (3)	Robert Welsh	(425) 454-5628
Director (2)	John Christiansen	(417) 646-8526
Director (2)	Mark Nordstrom	(614) 833-0499
Director (2)	Linnea Renner	(218) 365-3655
Director (1)	Patrick Cox	(214) 342-8786
Director (1)**	Dave Greenlee	(605) 594-6287
Director (1)	Wade Herbranson	(218) 365-3162
Director (1)	Jay Walne	(901) 278-2633
At-large**	Michael McMahon	(612) 483-5759

\*Number in parenthesis is years remaining in current term

\*\*Executive committee member

## Program Liaisons

Mr. Bill Spice	National Director of High Adventure Philmont Scout Camp, BSA Cimarron, NM 88714 (505) 376-2281
Mr. Doug Hirdler	Director and General Manager, Northern Tier National High Adventure Program P.O. Box 509 Ely, MN 55731 (218) 365-4811
Mr. John W. Creighton, Jr.	Chairman, National High Adventure Committee Weyerhaeuser Company P.O. Box 2999 WRE2-2 Tacoma, WA 98477-2999
Mr. Steve Fossett	Chairman, Northern Tier National High Adventure Committee Marathon Securities 401 So. LaSalle Street, Suite 200 Chicago, IL 60605

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Dave Hyink presents Bob Cary with a special edition Russell Knife to honor him for special service to the Base (see "President's Comments"). Photo by Roy Conradi

### Directors Meeting Minutes

The Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association Inc. Saturday, September 5, 1998 Convened at the Charles L. Sommers National High Adventure Base, Ely, MN 55731  
 Directors Present: Barry Bain, John Christiansen, Roy Conradi, Pat Cox, Butch Diesslin, Dave Greenlee, Wade Herbranson, Dave Hyink, Mark Nordstrom, Bob Welsh  
 Directors Absent: Linnea Renner, Jay Walne  
 Others Present: Nigel Cooper, Treasurer

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 A.M. by President Hyink. The directors present constituted a quorum. Election of the Executive Committee: Motion to Nominate Dave Hyink, Butch Diesslin, Nigel Cooper, Dave Greenlee and Mike McMahon as members of the Executive Committee. (Motion Conradi/Second Herbranson) Carried. Operating Plan: The growth in the scope and number of activities of the association requires that an operating plan be developed. Dave Hyink presented a draft of the operating plan, the lead person for each area would be a member of the Executive Board. The operating plan identifies four Operating Areas: Membership, Budget and Finance, Communications, and Events and Projects. The proposed listing of operating plan functions, goals and leaders was discussed. The lead person for each area is: Membership - Diesslin; Budget and Finance - Cooper; Communications - Greenlee; Events and

Projects - McMahon. The operating plan was approved. 1999 Budget - Treasurer Nigel Cooper a summary of revenue and expenses for the current year, and presented the 1999 operating budget. Motion to adopt by Christiansen, second by Welsh. Carried. Use of Alumni Logo - The use of any and all Alumni Association logos must be approved by the directors of the association. Mark Nordstrom will copyright the logos of the association. Complimentary Newsletter Recipients - The association will mail copies of the "Reflections" newsletter to all contingent leaders for one year. Members are encouraged to provide addresses for other recipients of complimentary copies of the newsletter. Seasonal Staff Support Program: Agreed to continue the association's seasonal staff support program: first year - \$35 trading post credit; second year - Meany canoe paddle, third year - Kondos guide pack. Ideas are being sought for an appropriate fourth year support item. Special Recognition Awards: Special recognition awards of a 75th anniversary commemorative Russell knife, be given to Bob Cary, Sam Cook, Jim Brandenburg, and Don Meany. Motion Nordstrom/Second Bain. Approved. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 A.M. Respectfully Submitted, Blaine "Butch" Diesslin, Association Secretary

## Seasonal Staff Scholarship Program Launched

After several years of discussion, a program to provide educational scholarship opportunities for returning seasonal staff members became reality in 1998. Patterned after a similar program in the Indianhead Boy Scout Council, a joint operating agreement between the SAA and the Northern Tier National High Adventure Committee was penned in early 1995 by then-Northern Tier Chairman, **Charley Hann** and approved by both organizations. Under the new program, the SAA, because of our [501(c) 3] tax-exempt status, will be the fiscal agent for funds raised by the Northern Tier Committee and SAA to be used for the awarding of scholarships. This Northern Tier Program Fund will be administered by an Advisory Committee consisting of three members each from the SAA and the Northern Tier Committee, plus the Northern Tier General Manager.

A generous gift by Northern Tier Committee Chairman, **Steve Fossett**, combined with contributions from Committee member **Dick Shank** (in memory of his father, and former Committee member, **Don Shank**) provided the funds to "jump-start" this important program.

Recipients for 1998 include: **Jason Reis** - Iowa State University, **Elizabeth Orman** - University of North Dakota, **Matthew Sturgell** - Michigan Technological University, **Thomas VanRiper** - Itasca Community College, **Kimberley Miller** - Michigan State University, **Paul DeWitt** - Ferris State University, **Jared Carlson** - Lawrence University,

**Adam Alsbrook** - University of Texas, **Joshua Templin** - University of Minnesota - Duluth, **Douglas Ramsey** - Vermilion Community College, **Brian Buhl** - Vermilion Community College, **Elizabeth Vollmer** - Vermilion Community College, **Francesca Cafferata** - Oregon State University, **Sean Sessions** - University of Washington - Tacoma, and **Paul Laine** - Laurentian University.

The 1998 scholarship awards totaled \$13,500. Although both the number and amount of awards given in any year will naturally be limited by the funds available, the intention of the program is to award \$500 after the second year of service, \$1000 after the third, and \$1500 after the fourth. This past season the three bases employed just over 100 seasonal staff members. According to General Manager, **Doug Hirdler**, over 70 percent indicated that they intended to return in 1999. He indicated that "...while very few staff members are here for the money," it was his belief that the possibility of educational assistance "sweetens the pot." If all of the intended returnees apply and qualify for a scholarship, some \$40,000 would be required in 1999!

Northern Tier Chairman, **Steve Fossett** has appointed **Charley Hann** to head a committee composed of **Tom Beaton**, **Dick Shank**, **Jack Osborn**, **J. Patrick Ross**, and **Dave Hyink** to develop a campaign to raise the needed funds. Please forward your ideas and potential funding sources to any of them.



Robert Welsh won the raffle of the Seliga Canoe built for Sandy. Standing at the canoe in this picture are (left to right) Robert Welsh, Cherie Bridges, Joe and Nora Seliga. Photo by Roy Conradi.



# Rendezvous '98 Draws "Old" Alumni

photos on this page and page 1 by Roy Conradi



Charlie's boys from the 1950s



Charlie's boys from the 1960s



Northern Tier staff from the 1980s



Stories and singing highlight Friday night's campfire



Sommers Alumni Association Board



Staff from the 70s



SAA President Dave Hyink conducts business meeting



Voyageur camp on base during Rendezvous '98

Reprints of photos taken at the Rendezvous can be ordered from Roy Conradi (59-63) at 770/972-8115.



# 1998 Rendezvous Banquet Remarks

by Cherie Bridges

Pat Cox has reminded me that when handing down your Seliga to the next generation, it was customary to give that individual some instructions on caring for it. I want to tell you instead about the history of this special canoe. The funds generated from this raffle will be used to enhance seasonal staff training, as part of the SAA Sandy Bridges Memorial Fund.

This Seliga canoe is no ordinary canoe—it is a work of art, lovingly constructed by Joe and Nora Seliga and presented to Sandy in 1995 by members of the "Bridges Brigade." Many of us will never forget how Joe portaged the canoe from the stockade gate to the area near the entrance cabin where we were gathered for the big surprise. It was a thrill for us all. Surprising Sandy was no mean feat! (Many of you recall that he knew of your escapades long before you returned to base. He always said that his little friends, the chipmunks and chickadees, kept him well informed of your secrets. But, not this time!) I recall that when he finally turned and saw Joe with the canoe, he still did not realize that it was intended for him. Overwhelmed with gratitude is the only way I can describe his reaction—he was at a complete loss for words.

As a guide during the late 50s/early 60s, Sandy cherished his Seliga canoe. He told me how after each trip, it would be carefully inspected, sanded and repainted, as necessary. This was typical of the care guides gave to their equipment. It was a mark of status to paddle a Seliga and each guide painted his own paddle brand design on the stern. Sandy's brand was taken from his Order of the Arrow ordeal and includes the tracks of the raccoon from his OA name.

Charley guides continue to cherish their Seliga canoes and are often wait patiently for months or years until their number comes up and Joe crafts a special canoe for them. Legends have grown up around this canoe. One that I especially enjoy is from Sarah Walne of Memphis. Husband Jay didn't have a proper garage for his new Seliga so he stored it in their living room for several months until Sarah threatened to put Christmas tree lights on it! Men handle their Seligas in much the same manner that others handle fine crystal.

I'm sure that many of you are wondering how I can bear to part

with this beautiful canoe. Sandy and I jointly decided last December to gift the canoe to the Alumni Association to seed the training fund. I want you to understand why. The key words are stewardship and family.

First, stewardship. In a moving tribute to Sandy, his old friend "Frenchy" Garfield of Massachusetts wrote: "There are giants in the land—we are privileged to have known one of them. Sandy believed he was a steward of the marvelous program he had inherited from such earlier giants as Carl Chase, Frank Bean, Charles Sommers, Hod Ludlow, Oren Felton, Parley Tuttle, and his dear friends and mentors, George Hedrick and Henry Bradlich. During his tenure, he served as an agent of change in helping the Canoe Base grow and prosper while steadfastly maintaining its best traditions.

The second key word is family. Our sense of "family" transcended ties of blood. Our children come from many corners of the world. Many of the Sommers staff and volunteers became Sandy's mentors, brothers, sons and daughters. Thanks to all of you who have been a part of our "family."

And, lastly, a blend of stewardship and family. We can agree that members of a family share the same gene pool. As members of the Sommers Canoe Base family, each of you also has the potential to be a giant in the lives of young people. When we toss a pebble into the lake, the miracles created by those ripples are often beyond our wildest dreams. In a recent letter to me, Frenchy added, "There are indeed giants in the land and from one will be made many." Knowing the current involvement and especially the potential strength of the Alumni Association gave Sandy great comfort before he left us.

I leave you tonight with an excerpt of a conversation between the Water Rat and Mole in *THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS*, one of Sandy's favorite childhood books:

"This has been a wonderful day!" said the Mole as the Rat shoved off and took to the sculls again. "Do you know, I've never been in a boat before in all my life."

"What?" cried the Rat, open-mouthed. "Never been in a-you never-well, I-what have you been doing, then?"

"Is it so nice as all that? Asked the Mole shyly, though he was

quite prepared to believe it as he leaned back in his seat and surveyed the cushions, the oars, the rowlocks, and all the fascinating fittings, and felt the boat sway lightly under him.

"Nice? It's the only thing," said the Water Rat solemnly, as he leaned forward for his stroke. "Be-

lieve me, my young friend, there is nothing-absolutely nothing-half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. Simply messing about in boats. Simply messing about in boats."

Cherie A. Bridges 2616 Woodland Avenue Duluth, MN 55803-1965 (218) 728-6925

## Tidbits on the Sommers Clan

**Dorothy "Dot" Asquith ('82)** [dottydot@compuserve.com] sends greetings to all from near Derby, UK. Dot works as a programmer and is active with Venture scouts. Dot invites you to stop by and meet her new daughter, Mir, when you're in the neighborhood.

**John E. Duke ('88-90)** is a Veterinarian in Panama City Beach, FL.

**Eric Edwards ('72-77)** [EE55@AOL.com] is and Engineer for Sigma Chemical Co., living in St. Louis, MO. Eric is active as an Assistant Scoutmaster.

Many thanks to **Bert Filemyr ('71-72, '75, '79-'81, '84, '88, '93, '97)** for sending us his "Randy Kit". Bert has taken it on every trip since receiving it in 1971.

**Mike Hundley ('96)** [mhundley@mines.edu] is a student at the Colorado School of Mines and remains active in scouting as a merit badge counselor in the Denver Area council.

**Paul N. "Nobby" Kumasaka ('80)** [paulnk@lisp.com.au] returned to the base while visiting the United States. Paul is an Anglican Priest in Lake Cargellino, NSW Australia and is hoping to start a chapter of the SAA at home.

Congratulations to **Jason Kracht ('91,92,94,97)** on the completion of his Electrical Engineering degree at Montana State. Jason is now working for Hewlett Packard in Rohnert Park, CA. [jkracht@pon.net] **Jiro Jussila ('79, '81)** [jiro.jussila@paulig.fi] says hello to all, especially the other 1979 International Staff members.

The "Linement Brigade" **[Butch ('61 -) and LucyDiesslin, John ('63-65) and Sally Oosterhuis, Dave ('77,78,80), Matt and Nick Bird and Dan Bird]** had their annual trip through the

Quetico in late July.

**Karl Lukens [klukens@jerseycape.com]**, has many fond memories of being an 8-trip advisor beginning in 1971 from Cheltenham, PA. Karl is now retired, but not from scouting.

**Dan Mahoney ('61-64)** [74473.1145@compuserve.com] now makes his year-round home in Lower Hutt, New Zealand. If you happen to be in the neighborhood...

**Don McDaniel ('86)** [donm@netvista.net] is living in San Ramon, CA, where he is the owner of The Last Handyman.

Welcome to new Affiliate member **Toni Lee Nemanick**; friend of the base and former guide ('65-'74) for the Northern Lakes Girl Scouts canoeing programs. Toni is employed by Hibbing Community College.

**Allen Rench ('75-79)** couldn't get a flight out of Dallas, TX by air to attend Rendezvous 98 - so he drove to Ely picking up his nephew Hunter Rench in Oklahoma City, OK and **Lynne Cunnin'ham Tolbert ('78-80)** in Derby, KS.

**Rolland E. "Rollie" White ('63, '64, '66)** [rollandwhite@compuserve.com] **Dave Wolfe ('61-64, '68)** found him in Houston, TX. Rollie is an engineer/manager.

**NEW LIFE MEMBERS:** Chris Baker, 1986; Eric Edwards, 1972-77; George W. Collins II, Advisor 1973-76, '78-80, '83, '88, '90, '98; Paul N. Kumasaka, 1980; Richard L. Lehmann, Advisor 1982-84, '86, '88, '90, '92, 95; Mark L. Rolandt, 1963-65; Rolland E. White, 1963, '64, '66

**Cheryl (Maki) Lafollette '74-'75** was awarded her Ph.D. in Health Services Management in October, 1998. Dr. Lafollette lives in St. Cloud, MN.



# Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc. 1998 Annual Membership Meeting Minutes

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, Moose Lake Road, Ely, Minnesota 55731 on the 5th day of September A.D. 1998 at 1:08 P.M., pursuant to Article III, Section 2 of the Bylaws of the Corporation. The meeting was called to order by President Dave Hyink. There were approximate one hundred members present. The members present and the properly executed proxies received constituted a quorum. President Hyink opened the meeting by reading "Up North" by Sam Cook. President's Report - Dave Hyink President Hyink gave a brief sum-

mary of the association's activities over the past year. Treasurer's Report - Nigel Cooper The association is able to meet its financial obligations. The association is working with the Northern Tier National High Adventure advisory committee on the fiscal management of the seasonal staff scholarships. The association will be having an audit performed. Membership Committee - Blaine Diesslin Association membership as of August 1 was 359 members. Of those 178 are Life members. The rate of growth in membership has been very low, with many of the new members being received from current year crew advisors. Members are encouraged to personally recruit

their alumni contemporaries who are not members. Miniature Paddle Brand Paddles - Barry Bain Reported that 11 miniature paddles are ready to be hung in the display case and 7 more are almost ready. Members are encouraged to participate. Publications - Mark Nordstrom The association will continue with three scheduled issues of the *Reflections* newsletter per year. The circulation of the newsletter is approximately 1,200. Thanks were extended to all article contributors, others were invited to participate. Much positive feedback has been received about the newsletter. The association's Internet Web page - WWW.HOLRY.ORG - is used to disseminate information electronically. Members are encouraged to contribute materials, to keep the content "fresh". The association plans to expand the topics and information available. The HOLRY listserv is being redesigned to be a moderated list. Members will be notified when the listserv is ready for use. Election of Directors - Mark Nordstrom The nominating committee submitted the following candidates to fill the expiring terms on the board of directors: Roy D. Conradi, Blaine R. Diesslin, David M. Hyink and Robert Welsh. The membership unanimously accepted these nominations. The terms of these directors expire at the 2001 A.D., annual meeting of the membership of the association. President's Report - Dave Hyink Dave gave the membership an overview of the association's organizational operating structure and plan. The expanding scope of the association's activities requires that responsibility for coordinating these activities needs to involve more people, and that these activity coordinators be identified. Recognition Award The alumni association gave Bob Cary a special

75th Anniversary commemorative Russell Knife, in appreciation for Bob's many contributions to the betterment of the Northern Tier National High Adventure programs. Staff Recognition Awards The association continued its Northern Tier seasonal staff recognition and support initiative. The members of the 1998 seasonal staff members received: a trading post credit for first year staff, a XY Company custom made ash canoe paddle for second year staff, and a Kondos Outdoors personal pack for each of the 3+ year staff members. The packs had the SAA logo, the year and the recipient's name embroidered on the pack flap. Finnish International Staff Reunion Alumni member Tero Mustonen reported that 15 of the former staff from Finland met for a "reunion" in Finland earlier in August. He brought "best wishes", and read his poem entitled "To the West."

OLD BUSINESS Greeting Card Sales Program. Mark Nordstrom reported that the 1998 greeting card, featuring "The Commissary" (Food Outfitting Building) is now available. New marketing options are being explored.

NEW BUSINESS There was no new business.

OTHER BUSINESS Gene Felton commended the officers and directors of the association for their tireless efforts. Tom Lutyens requested others interested in compiling oral history tapes to contact him. Ron Miles presented a photograph to the association and Sommers National High Adventure Base, commemorating Joe Seliga's long affiliation with the scout canoeing program.

ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:13 P.M.

Blaine R. Diesslin, Association Secretary

## Reaching Back From Beyond

by Frenchy Garfield

I only met Chuck Kenaga once. It was in the summer of 1985 when I took my last crew to the base. I was getting ready to retire after 25 years as advisor of Explorer Post 2, Sudbury, and Chuck was spending the summer relaxing as a guide after completing his residency at medical school. I always suspected that Sandy Bridges set the whole deal up. Since I was a couple of years longer in the tooth than he was, he figured that having a bonafide M.D. along was a good way to get me off his conscience. It was a trip back in time for me, as we visited many of the same lakes and campsites that we first used back in 1963 with Roy Clark. I had the pleasure of showing Chuck the island site on Burt Lake where we once again took the traditional lay-over day. In more than 20 years, the place hadn't changed. Chuck was a good guide with an appreciation of the canoe country and he loved to fish. I had brought along some prototype lures that the Mepps people wanted tested, so we spent nearly every evening on the water. The last day of the trip we conducted the traditional Voyageur initiation ceremony on the U.S. side of Prairie Portage and gave Chuck a miniature canoe paddle that the grubs had signed, along with a patch signifying honorary membership in the Voyageurs. We signed each other's pictures and exchanged addresses. I heard from Chuck once after that. He dropped a note looking for pictures of an encounter we had with a couple of moose. I got some together along with an enlargement

of a shot I took of him watching a sunset on Sahra Lake, but somehow managed to lose his address. I kept the enlargement, hoping Chuck would surface again with a new address. I wanted him to have the enlargement for his office waiting room. I promised myself that I'd keep trying to make contact and religiously checked the directory each year, hoping he would turn up. He never did. I had given him up for lost before he reached back from across the years. Last summer I got a package from Larry Kenaga, his brother. It contained the paddle that we had given Chuck in 1985, a crew picture that we had signed, and a letter. The letter explained that Chuck had died of a brain tumor in Rochester, New York, where he was practicing. Larry wrote that he had found the paddle and crew picture among Chuck's personal effects and wanted us to have them. "They must have had some special significance for Chuck to keep them," he said. We exchanged e-mail correspondence and I happened to remember the sunset picture. Would the family like it? Yes, they would. So I packaged it carefully in a tube and sent it along. The response was instant and emotional. Soon the slide will be on its way and so on copies of the print will grace the walls of several Kenaga family homes. I have always held that friendships made and cemented on the trails and portages of the Boundary Waters as special and sacred. Now it seems they reach beyond the grave.

## Rendezvous '98

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looking at the stars and eating barbecued bear on Lake Louisa. Also, he is the guy who hired me (and Phil and Toni) to guide backpacking trips for kids from the Denver Boys Club. Bert says the reunion had a major impact on him - "very powerful, profound, and positive." Wow. I guess I was pretty busy most of the time, so I don't think it hit me until I was on my way home. I had taken the time to stop by the Dorothy Molter Museum for the

first time. Toni told me she had seen my name was in one of Dorothy's books, so it was not a surprise to find it. When I saw my name in the 1968 book, it was as a member of a guide's trip - along with the names of fellow guides Tom Lutyens, Jed Collins, Phil Hyde, Don Helms, and Ode Christensen. Warm memories of that trip came back to me unexpectedly. My hope is that everyone had as much fun as I did.



# Savanna Portage leads Eagle Scouts to Region 10 Canoe Base in 1941

By Chuck Rose and Eric Peterson

At various times in the past, the BSA has explored potential canoe program areas beyond the Quetico-Superior, including Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods as early as 1936. More recent examples include the Bissett and Atikokan areas. In 1941, the Region 10 sponsored (along with the Minnesota Historical Society and the U.S. Forest Service) a retracing of a historic fur trade route from Duluth to St. Paul. The project consisted of two parts. First, an Eagle Scout Trail camp was set up near Sandy Lake in central Minnesota, just east of the Mississippi River. Forty-four Eagle Scouts from all over the Region participated. In addition to enjoying the North Woods, their task was to reopen the Savannah Portage Trail, the height of land link of the route. They worked eastward from the west end of the portage cutting eight miles of trail. Second, four of the Eagle Scouts and two Region 10 guides were selected to paddle the route. Don Freeman of Minneapolis was one of the lucky four. Now an active Scouter in Brainerd, Minnesota, Freeman (now an Alumni member) recently talked about this once in a lifetime trip and shared his log of the canoe trip put together by guide Coleman (Dud) Fitz. Other group members were guide Dick Lavine, George Twedel, Bob Salvesson, and Clint Odell. Fitz and Lavine were selected because they had just finished the Paul Bunyan Canoe Derby, a ten-day Mississippi canoe race from Bemidji to Minneapolis.

On July 17, 1941, the group was dropped off at Minnesota Point on the edge of Lake Superior by Regional Executive, Kenneth Bentz. Though not carrying furs, their cargo included a deerskin scroll from Mayor Hatch of Duluth to be delivered to Governor Stassen in St. Paul. Fitz wrote, "Mr. Bentz took one last worried look at us, wished us luck, and drove off to the University of Scouting Camp at Itasca." They immediately went... nowhere! Windbound until the next morning, they cooked bacon to suit individual tastes and rested. The next day, finally underway, this elite corps. of Eagle Scouts... got lost! The rest of the day was spent trying to locate the mouth of the St. Louis River which took until nearly dark. Two days and not much progress. The third

day went much better as they pushed upstream carrying around several dams, through Jay Cook State Park, and camped in a loaded blueberry patch. Even that summer, before Pearl Harbor, the nation was on alert. Every dam had guards to protect against sabotage. "Even we Boy Scouts had a heck of a time obtaining permission to come near the dams and paddle in the back water of the dams," Fitz wrote. However, "the guards on the dams had been told that we were coming, so we encountered no trouble." They pushed, carried, portaged, and lifted upstream towards Cloquet, setting up camp "in a swell patch of poison ivy."

Monday was another tough paddle upstream. But Fitz's journal was optimistic: "The fellows have become real voyageurs already. They have learned that it takes force to push a canoe up rapids and will swing a paddle with all their might; will poke off rocks with their paddle blade, their shaft or their hands. On the command they think nothing of jumping out into the waist high churning water. The canoes must go on."

The next several days brought more of the same. The stream got narrower and the mosquitoes got thicker. They stopped for groceries and ice cream in the town of Floodwood before turning up the log and brush choked East Savannah River. It was not much further to the Savannah Portage, at least in theory. Previously, they had arranged for the canoes to be picked up and trucked across the Portage. But in the spirit of the trip, the Scouts planned to carry the rest of their gear. The main problem was the government had spent 50 years slowly ditching and draining most of the flat, swampy areas near the height of land. Freeman remembers, "When we got to the bog, it was dry, it was about 30 miles across there." From where the canoes were picked up, it was a good 20 miles to the beginning of the trail cut during the Eagle Scout Trail camp. In addition, the supposed route, an Indian Trail, looked old and unused. They pressed on.

"The intense heat and mosquitoes were driving us crazy. We were sweating so terrifically that the mosquitoes had an easy time biting through our tight sweat-soaked clothes. No lotion would stay on



Don Freeman, in Brainerd in 1998, recalls the Duluth to St. Paul Savannah Portage canoe trip of 1941

long enough to be of any use. It was plain hell. Every Scout pushed on with only his sheer guts to aid him."

Finding a logging camp cabin provided relief for the night. The next day, the mosquitoes were better, but the heat felt worse. Later, the group learned it was the hottest day of the summer.

"We packed steadily southwestward. It must have looked like an African Safari. In single file we silently pushed forward each with a heavy load. To prevent the chance of becoming lost in the high grass and brush we stayed as close together as possible and straggling was not allowed. Deer were abundant. Every half hour we would stop and take our sweat loaded packs from our backs. At noon we admitted to ourselves that we were off the trail. Leaving their packs, Dick and Dud cut straight south through the tamaracks. An hour later they discovered an east-west ditch with clear, flowing water. Nothing in this country could contaminate the water and no other invitation was needed. Half a mile south from the east end of the ditch, the Savannah Portage was at last found. The ground was not only historic, it was lovable. Connection had at last been made. Known territory was being entered."

The next day, the Scouts made the Mississippi River. Except for the deerflies, the rest of the trip

was quick and uneventful. The few rapids were negotiated, the dams portaged without problems. They arrived in St. Paul delivering the deerskin and getting their pictures in the paper.

After the accolades in St. Paul, the participants were offered jobs with Region 10 at Moose Lake. Fitz requested a week off before returning to the "Border." In a letter home, he wrote "I don't mind saying that I for once would like a vacation from paddling." Fitz also wrote to the Region, "Unless there is high water in the spring, I would never advise anyone to repeat the trip... I would say that a trip through that country is much harder nowadays than in the days of the voyageurs. In those days the government had not ditched and there was enough water in the swamps to float a canoe." Don Freeman guided two trips at the end of that season, both the standard two weeks long. He remembers, "The first one was a bunch of Girl Scouts. The second was with Boy Scouts." By that time, summer was over. Don would have liked to come back, but World War II intervened and he was in the Army for "35 years, 2 months and 29 days." He wasn't able to return to the Canoe Base until an OA Regional conclave in 1986. Things had obviously changed. Yet, ask him about that summer before the war and his eyes light up.



# 1998 SAA Holiday Greeting Card Sale

Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association is taking orders for our 1998 Holiday Greeting Cards. By using these cards, SAA members and supporters may send holiday greetings to friends, business associates and fellow scouts and send a message of commitment to programs of Northern Tier High Ad-

venture, BSA. Orders will be shipped promptly. This year's card features Bob Cary's drawing of the Commissary Building in a winter storm. A picture of the building was featured in the last issue of *Reflections*. It's printed using highest quality thermography (what's often referred to

as embossed) on premium cards of recycled paper. The cards are blank inside. You choose your own message. 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, 1995, 1996 and 1997 cards featuring the "Lodge," "Hanson House," "Canoe Yard," and "Gateway" are available at discounted prices. A special series set of all five previous years is available at a special price. As is a limited edition Holiday sampler. All orders subject to availability.

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- \_\_\_ 1995 Cards - Canoe Yard x \$20.00= \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ 1994 Cards - Hanson House x \$20.00= \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ 1994 Cards - Hanson House Notecard, Plain Inside x \$20.00= \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ 1993 Cards - The Lodge Notecard, Plain Inside x \$20.00= \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ 1993 Cards - The Lodge, summer view, plain inside x \$20.00= \_\_\_\_\_
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