



SOMMERS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

REFLECTIONS



NORTHERN TIER NATIONAL HIGH ADVENTURE

Okpik: An Advisor's Story

by Dave Greenlee

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

Members of our Explorer Post from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, understand cold and windy winters, but we have only been on one winter outing together. On that outing, we stayed indoors tending a fire in the Scout house at Newton Hills. Okpik taught us more about how to stay comfortable while having fun in the cold.

I think most of our crew just wanted to have fun in the snow, so the up-front training didn't always capture everyone's undivided attention. After we got out on the trail, we found out who was listening! Our sleeping bags were augmented to become "cold-weather sleeping systems," and those of us who had inadequate footwear checked out "mukluks" and "bat-wings." Our Peak-1 camp stove got "pre-heater paste," or we could have switched to an alcohol burner. We would be carrying water bottles close to our bodies and we would make an extra effort to keep ourselves hydrated. We would wear mittens on a string so that we could quickly flip them off, use our hands, and then quickly put them back on.

With our minds packed full of new winter camping techniques, we headed for the heated cabins to rest



Okpik crew members unload the gear sled at the quinzee snow shelter. Nights are warm inside, but long. Skis stand in the snow in front.

up. We needed to get some sleep and process this information so we could spend the next night on the trail. It was about zero degrees, and we were told it probably wouldn't be any warmer on Saturday night.

Saturday morning, after breakfast in the dining hall, we were outfitted with cross-country skis. They were short and especially well-adapted to maneuvering through the woods. Our trail would be a summer portage trail with tight corners and lots of ups and downs. We checked out covered sleds that resembled little boats that we could drag over the snow easily. We arrived well prepared, but several of us chose to augment our personal gear with parkas, boots, mittens, and hats for more comfort.

With our classroom training and outfitting completed, we hit the trail Saturday morning. We find that these skis don't glide as well as touring skis, especially when pulling a sled. On the other hand, they are quite maneuverable, easy to learn on, and we can move much faster than we would with snow shoes. The skis have "Berwin bindings" that were developed at the Base. With these ingenious devices we ski while wearing the mukluks and felt-lined boots that keep our feet warm.

Winter food is the highest-caloric food we can carry, because we will burn extra fuel just to stay warm. Add to that the demands of skiing and building a snow hut (called a quinzee), and you are talking thousands of calories per day. They sent us out with lots of gorp, bay bread, peanut butter, and military type MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) that are loaded with fat, carbohydrate, and protein - i.e. fuel for our stoves.

It seems like every time the food comes out, a Canada Jay joins us. Some are pretty brazen and certainly earn their nickname - camp robber. In addition to an "in your face" attitude in the winter, we notice that their gray color seems to contrast with the snow much more than the dusty appearance we remember from summer.

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

left from previous campers, so everybody will have a snow home to sleep in. We don't need no stinking tents! We make supper in the dark, and hit the sack shortly afterwards. Using a newly learned trick, we run around the campsite a bit to generate internal body heat that will initially warm up our sleeping systems. Hey, it works!

On Sunday morning, I realize a major difference between summer and winter. The nights are long! I am quite comfortable in the sack, but I have been in here for about 12 hours now, and it's still dark out. Next time, I'm bringing a flashlight and a good book. When we finally get up in the light, it doesn't take us much time to pack up our sleds and make our way back to the Base. It was a cold night, but nobody seems to have suffered from the experience.

I wouldn't yet profess to be as wise as an Okpik in the ways of winter. I can't say I would want to be snowbound in the woods waiting out a blizzard. But, after an Okpik weekend, I know we are all a bit smarter about cold weather camping. And we had a great time.

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

greenlee@dakota.net
Dave Greenlee 48332 254th St.
Garretson, SD 57030

President's Message

Dave Hyink

It was a beautiful fall day — Labor Day — on the campus of Pacific Lutheran University. I had just returned (prematurely, due to the Northwest Airlines strike) from the 75th Anniversary Rendezvous with an unfulfilled need to have a relaxed visit with folks who shared my love for the Base and the North Country. My solution — arrange a mini-reunion of the members of my Explorer Post who served on the 1998 staff: **Brendan Ward, Ron Scott, and Stephanie Stout.**

As we enjoyed afternoon sun at a street-side picnic table south of the campus, we talked at length about their trips, trails, trials and tribulations of the past season. I was impressed (but not surprised) at the individual growth that took place in each of them over those short months. The past summer had marked the passage of much of the "generation gap" that natu-

rally exists between Scouts and their leader. With respect to the North Country we were now peers — sharing a bond that Sommers Alumni understand well. That gathering once again validated in a very personal way just why, as Alumni, we do what we do!

Speaking of "doing what we do" — the articles in this issue of *Reflections* highlight a number of upcoming opportunities for you to become involved in SAA activities in a personal way. Your participation in workweek at one of the three Bases, as a member of the training staff (either in the woods or on the Base), or assisting with Staff Scholarship Fund Development Program, offers an opportunity to make a much-needed contribution to our program. I urge each of you to give someone a call and "sign-on."

Words from the General Manager

Doug Hirdler

At the National Executive Board Meeting in February of 1999, the properties committee voted to spend \$582,500 on the following capital expenditures: \$30,000 to purchase a new 4-wheel drive Chevrolet Suburban for Northern Tier use; \$87,500 for parking lot construction at the Donald Rogert Base near Atikokan; \$10,000 for a new roof on the Program Center at Northern Expeditions in Bissett; at the Charles L. Sommers Base in Ely — \$90,000 to build a female shower and sauna facility; \$40,000 to replace the roof on the Dining Hall; and \$325,000 to construct a new Baypost/Trading Post facility. When completed, \$1,180,600 will have been spent by the National Office since 1997 to make the Northern Tier facilities and programs even greater for our youth.

As of February 15th we had sent 134 staff contracts out for the 1999 season.

Our blessing stems from the growth that we have seen for this

year and that which we project will continue into next year and beyond. The total long term participation for 1998 was 3,972 involved in 532 crews. This compares to 2,583 involved in 340 crews during 1997. The 1999 sign up (as of February 15th) stands at 736 crews with 5,843 participants. This figure does not include the Order of the Arrow Northern Tier Wilderness Voyage participants which should total about 150.

I wish to thank each and every one of the Alumni Association members for your recent help in recruiting quality staff members for this, our biggest year ever. Your hard work will also be needed at this year's work week and in training and orienting the new Northern Tier High Adventure Staff for 1999. No doubt with out your involvement this record setting year would not be possible. I am sure that you can and will be able to see that your commitment has won over many to the "Far Northland"!

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 (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
Director (2)	John Christiansen	(417) 646-8526
Director (2)	Mark Nordstrom	(614) 833-0499
Director (2)	Linnea Renner	(218) 365-3655
Director (3)	Roy Conradi	(770) 972-8115
Director (3)	Robert Welsh	(425) 454-5628
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 Ranch, BSA
Cimarron, NM 87714
(505) 376-2281

Mr. Doug Hirdler Director and General Manager,
Northern Tier National
High Adventure Program
P.O. Box 509
Ely, MN 55731-0509
(218) 365-4811

Mr. John W. Creighton, Jr. Chairman, National
High Adventure Committee
Weyerhaeuser
PO 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

Volume 9, 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 55731-0429. *Reflections* is published three times a year (Oct, Feb., and July). The Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc. is a nonprofit 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 in 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 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@mail.vcc.mnscu.edu

1999 Nor'wester Staff Training

Terry Schocke, Director of Programs for the Northern Tier High Adventure Bases recently announced that the 1999 Nor'wester staff training will commence on Tuesday, June 1st and run through

Tuesday, June 15th. During this period, over 140 staff will be trained for the summer season, an increase of over 35 staff from 1998. Terry noted that the staff has been divided into two large "companies,"

which will be subdivided into smaller "brigades." Arrival dates and training will be staggered between the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) (approx. 90 staff) and the North West Company (NWC) (approx. 50 staff).

3rd or 11th, to participate in brief review sessions for the volunteers and to assist with on-base training of their brigade on such dates. Each trip will depart the following morning.

On-base training for both the HBC and NWC will also occur on June 8 - 9. SAA members who possess expertise in some area of wilderness knowledge or skills, such as flora and fauna identification, are also invited to participate during those dates. Also, if you know of other individuals who can provide interesting and informative program sessions or programs which can be integrated into training on June 8th or 9th, please contact us with the details for possible inclusion into the training program.

SAA members interested in participating with the Nor'Wester training should contact either Craig Pendergraft or Mike Holdgrafer for additional details. Craig can be reached at 650/506-4185 or at capender@oracle.us.com. Mike can be reached at 918/669-3048 or mholdgrafer@dollar.com.

Alumni Work Week

by Mike Sawinski

Hol-rye!

Priority work projects for Alumni Work Week this year have been identified for each of the three bases.

- * Bissett - construction of screened porches on the staff living units
- * Atikokan - construction of a screened porch between the staff living units
- * Ely - construction of Two additional First Night Cabins

Work Week for the Bissett and Atikokan Bases is scheduled for the week **before** Memorial Day weekend (May 22 thru May 28), and for the Ely Base the weekend of and the week **following** Memorial Day (May 29 thru June 6)

I request all interested Alumni

to contact me at the Sommers Ely Base via E-mail or snail mail by the First of May to establish their time commitment and to express their desired location of service. Allowing me this lead time I can have all jobsites prepared and have all required tools, equipment and materials available to timely complete each project. Depending on the amount of Alumni response, I have a list of additional projects that could be completed at each base.

Red-eye!

P.S. To allow me to stretch the maintenance budget and accomplish additional projects this year, I am asking the Alumni Association to consider funding the purchase of building materials for ONE of the First Night Cabins at the Ely Base.

Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura On The Issues

Boats and Motorized Portage Assistance

The BWCA should be maintained in its current form as a pristine natural asset. No further lakes should be opened up or closed to motorized watercraft. Lakes that are currently open to motorized watercraft should be fully accessible by portages. Banning motorized-vehicle-assisted portaging between lakes that are open to motorized watercraft is nothing more than an artificial ban on motorized watercraft. Regarding the lakes on the edge of the BWCA, unless a practical line can be drawn delineating motorized from non-motorized approved areas; the lakes should be classified for use either as fully motorized or non-motorized.

Snowmobiles in the BWCA

Snowmobilers in the BWCA follow set trails and roads. No ad-

ditional areas should be opened for the snowmobile use. The BWCA should be kept in its pristine natural condition. Areas in which motors of all forms are currently banned should be left to the animals, cross-country skiers and hikers.

Wolves in the BWCA

Humans are and should remain at the top of the food chain. We need to co-exist with the wolves. If the wolves start endangering people, people need to know that they are free to protect themselves without fear of retribution. Timberwolves in Minnesota are currently protected by federal law and are listed as threatened under the endangered species act. If the federal government takes the wolves off the threatened species list, I would not oppose a wolf-hunting season. We need to find the optimum balance between wolf and human populations.

New Motorization on Portages

Motorized portage service at two locations begins this summer under bids approved by the U.S. Forest Service. Deputy Forest Supervisor Thomas G. Wagner says service at Prairie Portage will be offered by LaTourell's, Inc. and James W. Zak will offer service at Trout Portage. A finding of no significant impact, allowing the motorized portages, was issued February 1 of this year. A 1998 congressional transportation bill included a line allowing the motorized portages. The Superior National Forest analyzed the effects of adding motorized portage operations and as a result of the analysis a finding of no significant impact for the motorized portage was signed.

The forest service says the motorized portages will transport people with disabilities across the portages, as well as watercraft, associated motors and camping gear, with or without the assistance of clients.

Restrictions on the motorized portage operations include: daytime use only, no cutting of live vegetation or timber without prior approval, signs must have prior forest service approval, hazardous materials use, storage and cleanup of spills will follow local, state and federal laws,

The decision by Forest Supervisor James W. Sanders says the portages will not significantly impact the character of quality of the BWCAW. He points out that the quota system remains unchanged and the level of use, including motorized use, is controlled through the quota. The addition of motorized portage services between motorized lakes will not result in a significant change to the BWCAW," the February decision says. It also points out that the use and effects of motors on motorized lakes is beyond the scope of the environmental assessment that found no significant impact.

Celebrate Sigurd Olson's 100th Birthday

This year -- 1999 -- is the 100th anniversary of Sigurd F. Olson (1899-1982), one of America's most beloved nature writers and influential conservationists. We've organized a series of celebrations and commemorations around the region throughout the year. Most of these events are free and open to the public. Please join us!

For more information about any of these events, call (715) 682-1223 or e-mail tgostomski@wheeler.northland.edu

Calendar of 100th Anniversary Events

May 8-9, 1999

Watch for a special presentation about Sigurd F. Olson at Canoe Sunsplash '99 in Ely, Minn.

June 11, 1999

Watch for a special presentation about Sigurd F. Olson at Chief Wooden Frog Campground in Lake Kabetogama, Minn.

July 3, 1999

Watch for a special presentation about Sigurd F. Olson at the Clearing at Ellison Bay, Wis.

July 8, 1999

6:30 - 9:30 pm

Evening program on Sigurd F. Olson, featuring remarks from Kim Bro, director of the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute; "Sigurd

Olson, So Well Remembered," a memoir by son Robert K. Olson; and "Images of Listening Point," a slide show by photographer

Eileen Long; free; Vermilion Community College in Ely, Minn.

July 9, 1999

9:00 am

"Who Was Sigurd Olson," a talk by biographer David Backes; Vermilion Community College in Ely, Minn.

10:00 am

Screening of "The Wilderness World of Sigurd F. Olson," featuring filmmaker Ray Christensen; Vermilion Community College in Ely, Minn.

12:30 - 6:30 pm

Tour of sites around the Ely, Minn., area: Sigurd Olson's writing shack, the Listening Point cabin, the Border Lakes Outfitting

Company.

6:30 - 8:30 pm

Dinner, featuring a keynote speaker Paul Gruchow, and evening campfire with musician and author Doug Wood; Camp Widjiwagan, Ely, Minn.

Sept. 23-26, 1999

Wilderness Horizons Conference honoring Sigurd Olson and his wilderness ethic; Northland



College, Ashland, Wis. The conference features keynote by Gaylord Nelson, discussion of Sigurd Olson's writing, and an

address by Olson biographer David Backes. For information, call (715) 682-1491 or e-mail crussell@wheeler.northland.edu

Rendezvous Revisited

Toni Nemanick

Rendezvous weekend took so many memories out of storage and brought them to life around campfire songs and stories. In the weeks since acquaintances were renewed and friendships rekindled, the fun and the camaraderie have lingered. So, I'm finally answering that persistent inner voice that reminds me to say "thank you" to everyone who made it so easy for me to just show up and be welcomed, fed, and entertained. (And to Dave Greenlee who mentions so many of you by name on the website. And especially to Dave Hyink, for his persistent voice telling me, "write your reflections.") Thank you. It's been well over 30 years since I first paddled up to and beyond Prairie Portage. When I think of the sheer numbers of us who were lucky enough to hear, and had the sense to answer, the call of the Far Northland, I am amazed and humbled. We have felt the bonds that were formed in shared experiences; we have seen the signs of commitment to caring for the wilderness. I was never so appreciative of being in such good company,

though, as when I attended the Annual Meeting of the Sommers Alumni Association. Who would've thought that any such meeting would be touching, inspiring, fun, funny, educational, satisfying - and last just over an hour? When I sent in my membership dues, I already knew that the SAA was up to lots of good. The website told me who was doing what at and for the Base. But words and photos transmitted electronically didn't prepare me for what I learned in person at the Annual Meeting. The accounts of scholarships awarded, Bay Post credits given, and paddles, books and packs purchased clearly demonstrated what it means to "walk the talk." Never have I been so sure that the money I send to an organization is so well spent. Are any of us surprised at the lessons still being learned from headwinds, thunderstorms, muddy trails, stary nights, sunburn days, beaver streams and hidden campsites? The SAA provides an avenue for finding ways to create and nurture these lessons, to pass on to others what was passed on to us

by Cliff Hanson, Dorothy Harry, Dorothy Molter, Benny Ambrose, Sandy Bridges, and

Timagami

Far in the grim Northwest beyond the lines that turn the rivers eastward to the sea,
Set with a thousand islands, crowded with pines, lies deep water, wild Timagami:
Wild for the hunters roving, and the use of trappers in its dark and trackless vales,
Wild with the trampling of the giant moose, and the weird magic of old Indian tales,
All day with steady paddles toward the west, our heavy-laden long canoe we pressed:
All day we saw the thunder-travelled sky, purple with storm in many a trailing tress,
And saw at eve the broken sunset die in crimson on the silent wilderness.

Archibald Lampman

Mark Trail in the boundary waters.

For the first time in the history of America's outdoor comic strip, the characters have entered the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Mark's wife, Cherry, and

Wilderness Area. It is the only wilderness area in the nation to be named after a character in a comic strip. A resolution is now (May 1998) pending in Congress to rec-

water rafting, Elrod received letters from outdoorsmen around the country reminding him to include life jackets. And upon receiving a letter from a youthful reader in

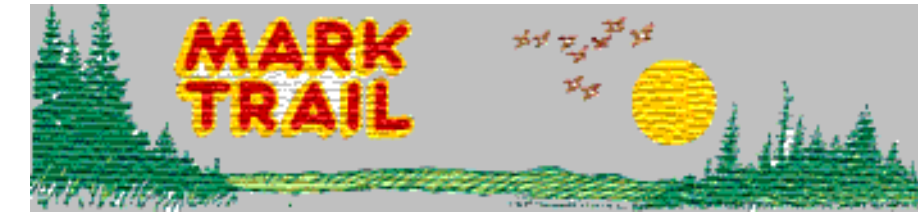
Okefenokee Swamp.

"We had to get out and push the boat through," Elrod says. "The fleas were more of a problem than the alligators."

Elrod took over "Mark Trail" in 1978, when Hill, who was responsible for the Sunday pages, died and Dodd retired. Elrod now draws and writes both the daily and Sunday pages.

During his years on the strip, Elrod has added new characters, including the boy Rusty; his dog, Sassy; and Kelly, another woman in Trail's life, and one-time competition for the devoted Cherry. Mark and Cherry would eventually marry.

Elrod was honored by President Reagan at a White House awards ceremony for his efforts to develop more pride in America. Among his 30 conservation awards, he has received recognition from the U.S. secretary of agriculture, the secretary of the interior, the secretary of commerce, the governor of Geor-



his co-worker, Kelly, are members of a canoeing group that travels through the area. During the trip Kelly has an uncomfortable experience involving a bear and is captured by drug smugglers operating in the area. Jack Elrod, who has writes and illustrates the strip, says those adventures are not based on actual events. He says he set the adventures in the Boundary Waters at the urging of the folks at Mark Trail Radio Theatre, in its sixth year of production on KFAI in Minneapolis (90.3 FM) & St. Paul (106.7 FM), a non-profit, community radio service.

Jack Elrod has been associated with the syndicated Mark Trail comic feature for the past 40 years. For the past 18 years, he has both written and illustrated the daily and Sunday strips. Elrod's Mark Trail comic strip has won over 30 conservation awards from government agencies and private organizations like the National Wildlife Federation, the U.S. Coast Guard, the National Forest Association, the Georgia Wildlife Association, the American Waterfowl and Wetland Association, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

For the Fish and Wildlife Service, Elrod has illustrated and written several coloring books which have been distributed to students throughout the nation. They include: Wetlands Coloring Book; Take Pride in America with Mark Trail: A Coloring Book; and Mark Trail Tells the Story of a Fish in Trouble (Illustrated).

In 1991 and 1992, Elrod served as a judge in the Federal Duck Stamp Contest. For the National Wildlife Federation, Elrod illustrated the 1980 poster which stresses the importance of preserving the nation's wetlands. A total of 16,500 acres in the Chattahoochee National Forest were reserved by Congress in 1991 as a Mark Trail

recognize Elrod for his ongoing work in keeping Americans in touch with nature. U.S. Representative John Linder from Georgia is sponsoring the bill. Current Honors and Awards: 1998: The National Weather Service and the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration honor Elrod in Washington, D.C. for his many years of public service. He also receives an award from the National Marine Fisheries Service. 1996: National Weather Service's Public Service Award. 1994: Golden Bear Award from the Department of Agriculture; Conservation Communicator of the Year Award from the Georgia Wildlife Federation; and a Proclamation signed by the Governor of Georgia. 1989: A national Take Pride in America Award presented at the White House, and a Conservation Award from the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior. 1987: Georgia Take Pride in America Award. Elrod was born in Gainesville, Georgia. He is married, with four children and 11 grandchildren.

In the years since his 1946 debut, Mark Trail has spent his time outdoors fishing, exploring the woods and being romanced by beautiful women.

Not bad for a self-styled everyman and roving editor for Woods and Wildlife magazine.

Created by artist and naturalist Ed Dodd, Trail was an environmentalist before it was fashionable to be one. His mission has always been that of preserving the vanishing American wilderness for future generations.

Written and drawn today by Jack Elrod, "Mark Trail" is distributed by King Features Syndicate and appears some 175 newspapers worldwide.

Readers have responded strongly to Trail and his adventures. After an episode involving white-

reads: "Remember, No Pipe!")

Elrod was born March 29, 1924, in Gainesville, Ga. After graduating high school, he joined the Navy in 1942 and during the next three and a half years participated in various engagements in the Pacific and in the occupation of Japan.

He studied advertising design and layout for two years at the Harris Advertising Art School in Nashville, Tenn., then graduated from the Atlanta Art Institute in 1949.

Elrod has been with "Mark Trail" almost from the beginning. The strip had enjoyed only four years of syndication when Elrod, fresh from school, joined Dodd and another artist-naturalist, Tom Hill, in a studio on Atlanta's Penn Avenue in 1950.

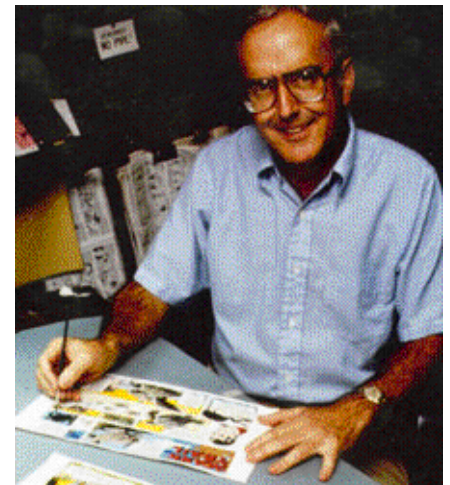
Dodd and Elrod met while they were in the Boy Scouts — Dodd as a scout leader, and Elrod a young scout. Dodd was doing advertising work at the time and had created a modestly successful one-panel "hill-billy" feature called "Back Home Again" in the 1930s.

Elrod copied such classic strips as "Flash Gordon" during his boyhood to hone his drawing skills. He initially thought of his job with Dodd as an apprenticeship.

"Ed just happened to need somebody," he recalls. "I had no idea I would stick with him for the rest of my life."

Elrod married the former Mary Anne Candee the same year that he started work on "Mark Trail."

Never one to stay tied to the drawing board, he joined Dodd on outdoors activities of all kinds. During one memorable fishing trip, the naturalists got lost in the



gia and the National Weather Service.

The famous Mark Trail wilderness trail, a 16,500-acre enclave in northern Georgia, is the only wilderness area in the world named after a comic-strip hero.

Elrod has produced a variety of materials for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to help teach schoolchildren respect for the country's environment and Mark Trail has recently been named the spokesman for the National Weather Service's emergency weather radio.

Elrod and his wife live in Georgia. They have four children and 11 grandchildren.

Tidbits on the Sommers Clan

SAA member **Jack Osborn** of Lake Havasu, AZ was recently recognized for seventy (70) years of continuous membership in the Boy Scouts of America! In addition, Jack just completed thirty (30) years as a member of the Northern Tier National High Adventure Committee; serving as its chairman and currently as an at-large member of the Staff Scholarship Development Committee. He and his wife Mary will be the first inductees to the Northern Tier Heritage Circle, which recognizes their major deferred gift to the Seasonal Staff Scholarship Endowment Fund. We are very proud to count Jack and Mary as longtime and loyal supporters of the Northern Tier Programs and the Sommers Alumni Association.

1998 Interpreter, **Stephanie Stout**, was the recipient of a Young American Award, presented at the 1999 Pacific Harbors Council Friends of Scouting Breakfast. The award recognizes outstanding youth and young adults in the Puget Sound Area.

Phil Berg 1972-73 is an Environmental Consultant and lives in San Francisco, CA. [philbeg@ricochet.net]

David Bryce 1978-83 is a Lawyer in Georgetown TX. David re-

members opening the Scout Lake fly-in canoe site for the Bissett, MB base.

Brian Buhl 1994-98 and **Liz Vollmer** 1997-98 wish to share the news of their engagement with their friends and co-workers. Brian and Liz are planning to be married in the spring or summer of 2000. We wish them our best.

Our thanks to **Curt Carley** 1959-62 for the pictures from a canoe trip in 1960 from the Base to Grand Portage on Lake Superior, along with **Loren Albert** 1958-61 and **J. Ralph Payne** 1957-62. Curt also included a copy of a congratulatory letter from Sig Olson to base director Cliff Hanson. Thanks also to Curt for photograph from a 1961 trip from the base to Ft. William, ON along the fur trade route. Other participants of that trip were **Loren Albert** and **Bill Bradlich** 1958-63. Both of these trips are mentioned on page 57 of Canoe Base by George D. Hedrick.

Thanks to **Owen Gibbs** (1967-

70) for "finding" **Hayden "Tink" Groth** 1969-70. Tink is a consultant and lives in Sugar Land, TX. Owen works for Sprint PCS and lives in Euless, TX.

Fred Rayman (1969-71) is organizing Fred's "No Frills" 2nd Annual Pro Canoe Races, June 5, 1999 on Johnson Lake, south of Ely. There will be 6, 12 and 18 mile races. Contact Fred for more details (218) 365-2867.

Amateur canoe racer **Jeff Dahl** (1970-72) was recently married on the beach in Hawaii.

Thanks to **Zane Beaton** (1971-73, 91) for "finding" **Paul Reitemeier** (1971-72). Paul's career has included professional scouting and he is now a professor of medical ethics at a college in Michigan.

Allan Rench (1975-79) has moved to Rochester, MN; where he works for Western Digital.

Brent Richards (1991-93) and his wife, Annette, are expecting their first child in March. They are

living in Bellingham, WA.

David Sproat (1967-68) is a Physician and lives in Duluth, MN.

Congratulations to **Glenn Steed** (1996, 98) on his graduation from Allegheny College in December, 1998.

Warren Wynn 1970-73 is a Software Design Engineer and lives in Montgomery, AL. [danpatch@mindspring.com]

NEW LIFE MEMBERS:

Kent Benken 1978,80

Phil Berg 1972-73

David Bryce 1978-83

Robert L. Cargill 1954-55

John A. England 1973, 76, 98,99

Advisor

Monte Fronk 1987-89 Advisor

Andy Fulkerson 1994 Advisor

Leroy Heikes 1993-96

Brian Jordan 1996 Advisor

Michael McMahan 1962-66

Ron E. Miles 1961-66

Terry Schocke 1997-

Dan Segersin

Bruce Tannehill 1961-63

New Handbook Has Many Updated Tips

By Ken Ringle. THE WASHINGTON POST

WHEN Sir Robert S.S. Baden-Powell invented the Boy Scouts, the idea was to equip a boy with the knowledge to keep him safe in the woods. But these days the Boy Scouts try to keep the woods safe from the boy.

The 11th edition of the Boy Scout Handbook, now hot off the presses, comes replete with tree-hugging ecological cautions banning everything from indiscriminate sapling slaughter to carving initials in bark with the trusty Boy Scout pocketknife that these days you better not take to school or they'll bust you for weaponry.

The new handbook advises the Scout of the coming millennium to, among other things, search the Internet for suitable campgrounds, practice "leave-no-trace" camping, and consider tofu for that one-pot campfire stew. It hasn't quite reached the point where they're singing "Kumbaya" around the old solar collector, but we've clearly come a long way from the days of building lean-tos and pine bough beds and ax-blazing trails.

The biggest dangers envisioned for today's Boy Scouts are not in the woods. Those practicing first-aid are cautioned to "treat all blood as if it were contaminated with blood-borne viruses." Tucked inside the front page of each hand-

book is a 21-page pamphlet on avoiding child abuse, including crotch-grabbing instructors and friends.

The 1998 edition of the Boy Scout Handbook is the first revision since 1990 and in its new recycled paper form, it addresses problems of woodcraft peculiar to our technoid age. Scouts are urged, for example, not to let the ease and economy of Global Positioning System gadgets supplant pathfinding skills with a map and compass. The book updates the old use-your-watch-as-a-sundial-compass trick with instructions for those wearing digital watches: Make an hour hand out of a twig.

The handbook is somewhat less touchy-feely than the 1990 version, which in one of its loopier recommendations suggested backpacking with an umbrella. But it's less complete, also: All the plant and animal lore has been ousted for repackaging in the Boy Scout Field Guide.

In its place is an expanded section on values intended to make the \$ 7.95 handbook, as the blurb announcing it declares, "not just a guide to the outdoors - but a guide for life." A Boy Scout is not only trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent, it informs us, he also

doesn't download dirty pictures from the Internet.

More than 36 million copies of the Boy Scout Handbook have been printed since its debut in 1910, and it has always been a fascinating mirror of America's contemporary concerns. The first edition lauded frontier values and included a cheerleading letter from Teddy Roosevelt. The fifth edition in 1948 boosted Americanism at the start of the Cold War. Following the turbulent 1960s, when much of society seemed bent on mocking the God-and-Country Boy Scout ideals, the handbook pushed the somewhat defensive slogan, "Scouting today's a lot more than you think."

It still is. Or at least it involves more. The first Scouts could earn 56 merit badges ranging from Agriculture to Taxidermy. Today they can earn 104, ranging from American Business to Woodwork. And if they can no longer qualify in subjects like Dairying, Blacksmithing, Beekeeping and Mining, they can earn badges in subjects of which founder Baden-Powell could scarcely have dreamed, like Cinematography, Space Exploration, Atomic Energy and Disabilities Awareness. They can even, God help us, earn a merit badge in Law.

Sam Cook says

We received a letter from Sam Cook which reads as follows: Dear Dave (Hyink), It was a pleasure speaking to the Sommers Alumni on the occasion of the 75th anniversary. I really had an enjoyable evening. Thanks for putting me up at the Holiday Inn, too. Please pass along my thanks to the entire group for the gift of the Russell belt knife with the 75th anniversary logo. It will make a lot of trips with me. Sincerely, Sam Cook

In Memory

We are saddened to report the passing of two individuals who were very special to many Sommers Alumni. Former Northern Tier Committee Chairman and prominent Viking Council and Central Region scouter, **Ted Carlsen**, passed away on November 2, 1998. **LaVonne Mattson**, wife of Ray "Big Red" Mattson (1962-66,68), died at home on December 27, 1998. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families, friends and loved ones.

Seasonal Staff Scholarship Funding Plan Established

At the winter meeting of the Northern Tier National High Adventure Committee, the Staff Scholarship Development Committee announced the overall plan for funding the Season Staff Scholarship Awards. The long-range objective is to fund awards from the Scholarship Endowment, established to receive major gifts and bequests from donors who are to be recognized as members of the *Northern Tier Heritage Circle*. The initial endowment target amount is \$1 million. To date, the Advisory Board has been informed of a deferred gift of \$250,000, a \$20,000 bequest and other bequests with unspecified amounts.

With respect to annual contributions, a pledge of \$1,000 per year for three years will: (1) establish a scholarship bearing the donor's

designated name, (2) be personally acknowledged by the recipient, and (3) qualify the donor to be recognized as a *Guarantor* of the Northern Tier Scholarship Program. All donors who pledge to the Scholarship Program \$500 or more per year for three years or more are to be recognized as members of the *Northern Tier Twenty-first Century Corps*.

A pledge of \$5,000 or more per year for at least three years, in addition to establishing named scholarships, will qualify the donor as a member of the *Chairman's Club*.

Finally, a donor making a cash contribution of \$25,000 to permanently endow one scholarship, will be recognized as a *Charles L. Sommers Fellow* and the Endowed Scholarship bearing the donor's name is to be awarded each year to

an honored recipient.

The immediate success of the Scholarship Program will largely depend on cash contributions. Long-

term sustainability will depend on the Endowment. The generous support of alumni and friends will be of utmost importance.

Listening Point Preserved

by Chuck Rose

One highlight of the last Rendezvous for a few dozen lucky Alumni was a visit to Sigurd Olson's Writing Shack and cabin on Listening Point. Many Alumni remember visiting Olson at his home in Ely or from his visits to the Base during training. But few have had as long an association with Sig as Joe Seliga. When Olson first moved to Ely in the early 1920s, he taught science at the high school. One of his first freshman Biology students was Joe, they were also neighbors. Seliga first fixed canoes for Olson when Sig owned Border Lakes Outfitters in the 1940s. In the 1950s, Joe repaired Sig's E.M. White canoe after many years of use; the canoe now hangs in the rafters in the cabin at Listening Point. Later, Joe repaired a B.N. Morris wood and canvas canoe for Sig that is now on display at the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute at Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin.

The Olson family has recently formed the Listening Point Foundation, Inc., a non-profit corpora-

tion with the purpose of "maintaining the natural and historic integrity of Listening Point for all time for the pleasure and inspiration of future generations"

The Listening Point Foundation, Inc. will be operated by a board of directors which will provide regular reports to the public on its activities. It will continue Sigurd Olson's work of wilderness education, and will strive to keep alive his belief that "Everyone has a Listening Point somewhere... some place of quiet where the universe can be contemplated with awe." Inquiries about the Foundation and tax-deductible contributions should be sent to the following address:

Robert K. Olson, Chair
The Listening Point Foundation, Inc.
13567 N. Uhrenholdt Dr.
Hayward, WI 54843
715-634-2305

Robert K. Olson is also a Sommers Alumnus. He worked as a guide in 1942.

The Hudson's Bay "Point" Blanket

by Craig Pendergraft

The short, narrow black lines at the edge of the blanket are called "points" and give the blanket its name. The number of points on a blanket represent the number of beaver pelts required for it in trade. The first blankets came in five sizes ranging from 1 point, 1 1/2 points, 2 points, 2 1/2 points to 3 points. The 6 point (Queen size) and the 8 point (King size) were introduced in modern times to accommodate our modern beds. The first HBC Point blankets were manufactured in 1780 by Mr. Thomas Empson. They were designed as a method of quickly establishing the number of "made" beaver skins needed to trade for different size blankets. The Hudson's Bay Point Blanket was one of the trading items most highly prized by the Indians in exchange for beaver pelts. The natives were particularly fond of the brighter colors. However, the white blankets were important in the winter so that the hunters would not be noticeable to the animals against the snow. Because of its great warmth and resiliency to wind and snow, HBC Point blankets were used to equip two of Admiral Byrd's expeditions to the Antarctic. The early Mount Everest expeditions also depended on HBC Point blankets to keep warm. Even Mr. & Mrs. Charles Lindbergh wore HBC Point blanket coats on their flight to Europe via Greenland and Iceland. Hudson's Bay Point blankets and blanket coats were prized for their warmth and durability by prospectors and miners during the gold rush days of the Klondike and Yukon. They have even been used in emergencies by Inuit and Eskimos as kayak sails and to wash the gold out of river gravel.

Only the Hudson's Bay "seal of quality" label guarantees that you

have a real Hudson's Bay "Point" blanket. The superb quality of the Hudson's Bay Point blanket has made it the standard of excellence in the blanket world for over two centuries. The blanket continues to be made in Great Britain using old world methods. A genuine Hudson's Bay Point blanket is never ribbon-bound or blanket stitched on the edge. Because of the special milling process, a genuine Hudson's Bay Point blanket will not fray or unravel. Some blankets are designed to imitate the Hudson's Bay Point blanket because of its superb reputation. However, no competitive look-alikes are made in the same way as a genuine Hudson's Bay "Point". How a Hudson's Bay Point Blanket is Made The Hudson's Bay Point blanket is made from a blend of select wool varieties from Great Britain and New Zealand. Each type of wool used contributes certain useful characteristics which, when combined with the distinctive milling process, produce the HBC Point blankets. The Point blankets are made today the same way as they were 200 years ago with old world processes combined with modern technology. In more recent times, attempts have been made to produce the blankets using new world processes. However, critical product testing of blankets made in this way proved that only old-world mill processes produce the high quality of a genuine Hudson's Bay Point blanket. Not too many years ago, Hudson's Bay Point blankets were always shipped uncut to the stores in pairs, just as they were rolled off the mill. The blankets were simply ripped in two. Because of their superior weave and quality, the blankets did not warp, twist, or unravel.

Sommers Alumni Information Update

Please make the following changes in the alumni association database:

NAME _____

HOME PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

WORK PHONE _____

FAX _____

E-MAIL _____

OCCUPATION/EMPLOYER INFORMATION _____

OTHER INFORMATION, TIDBITS, ETC. _____

Please send your changes to: **Sommers Alumni Association, P.O. Box 428, Ely, MN 55731-0428**

Or send information via e-mail to Butch Diesslin at: **butchnlucy@juno.com**

