



SOMMERS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

REFLECTIONS



NORTHERN TIER NATIONAL HIGH ADVENTURE

Millennium Rendezvous in September

Hol-Ry Charlie Guides. Reunion 2000 is now scheduled for September 1 to September 3, 2000 at the Charles L. Sommers National High Adventure Base, Ely.

Important Notes

Registration should be made in advance if you plan to stay at the Base. Please don't contact the Base. Every attempt will be made to notify you if cabins are full when your reservation form arrives (notice will go to address on reservation form). Caution: Do not move into a cabin until you check-in. There will be staff and there may be crews on Base. Not all cabins are open to us.

Check-in

At the Ely base until about 9 p.m. on Friday and again Saturday morning after breakfast until about 11 a.m. Late arrivals should let us know in advance.

Details

We will begin our Rendezvous 2000 on Friday evening with check in and cabin assignments for those staying at the base.

Plenty of open time afterwards to meet your fellow travelers and reminisce at the place of your choosing.

Cabins

Base management told us how many bunks are available, but are not monitoring registration or reservations. Don't try calling your friend on the Alumni Association Board of Directors to avoid filling out the form. All Directors have been instructed to tell everyone to send in the form. As you can imagine, keeping up with hundreds of special requests isn't a workable plan. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Stuff

We have a new item this year. Red Jac Shirts (staff item in the 50s & 60s) will be available this year. For those of us from a different era, this is a heavy wool shirt made at Bemidji Woolen Mills. Color options are Red or Red. It is high quality material and nicely built. The

SAA logo is embroidered on the breast. T-Shirts, Polos, Red Jac Shirts and Knives are available by preregistration. Even if you can't attend you can pre-order and it will be mailed to you after the event. We ran short and could not fill all requests last time (pre-orders were filled first).

Auction

No canoe drawing is planned this year. We will conduct an auction of some donated camping and canoeing related items on Saturday prior to our featured speaker. Those who would like to donate items for this auction should contact either Patrick Cox or Chuck Rose.

Speaker

This year's Rendezvous speaker will be Robert Olson. Robert worked on the Sommers staff in the 40s and is the son of the distinguished author Sigurd Olson, who wrote much about our beloved canoe country.

CALLING ALL "ALUMS" - PROJECTS - Previously called "Work Week"

By Bob "Red" Renner,

Traditionally our "Work Week" would be scheduled from May 27 through June 3 or 4 this year. And this schedule still stands, however, we're going to try something "NEW" this year, in addition to this week. Stay with me and I'll try to explain a little later on.

I can't expand on the message you received in the last issue of Reflections concerning the GREAT JOB done by so many of you in response to the call for help after the storm last summer. However, the aftermath of that storm still leaves much to be done. The storm sidetracked many projects that were in the mill for the season. Now, to add insult to injury, health departments in both Minn. and Ontario have declared the sewage systems at the Ely Base and the Atikokan Base to be inadequate and requiring immediate reconstruction. Perhaps this gives you some idea of the problems facing the continuation of good programming, time-wise, dollar-wise, and man-power-wise.

In the past, numerous people have indicated a desire to help, but the "work week schedule" just didn't mesh with their schedules. In an attempt to overcome this handicap, Mike Sawinski the Maintenance Director, has suggested we might try the following: Anyone wishing to come spend a weekend, or more, is invited to contact me with the dates they're able to come, and I'll see to it that ar-

rangements are made at the base for a work assignment that'll fit their time frame, along with any materials necessary. You might have a few fellow alums with whom you've kept in touch, and form "your own work crew", which would work out just great. Just give me or Mike a little advance notice, say one to THREE weeks.

Following is perhaps an abbreviated list of projects that are on or near the front burner at this time.

ELY BASE: (not necessarily prioritized)

1. Entrance Palisade wall repair and reconstruction as well as the palisade wall at the Maintenance building
2. Staff Building (old office) - remodel interior (presently resembles a junkyard office).
3. Assist with the new sanitation system. Hundreds of feet of plastic drainage pipe will need to be laid in shallow trenches to be dug with a backhoe.
4. An outside building sprinkler system is under consideration for fire protection.
5. The old crew and staff cabins need to be rehabilitated with floor and ceiling insulation, re-leveled, and new insulated windows installed (especially near the "elephants" for winter program use).
6. An addition between the Maintenance building and the Pole Barn shed.

ATIKOKAN BASE: (not prioritized)

1. Construct canoe racks for 24 - 28 canoes.
2. Construct Gear Lockers for staff's crew gear.
3. Install exhaust fans in shower / toilet rooms.
4. Remodel staff kitchen / dining area.
5. Construct addition on Bay Post, approx. 10' x 22'.

As you can see by these "wish lists", there is a lot to be done, and certainly not all of it can be done by volunteer alums, but we can make a difference and shorten this list with a little effort.

Incidentally, the "basic work week" will take place at ATIKOKAN BASE this year. If any of you can make it that week, or another time, we're open for suggestions on the dates. Please keep in mind that we work best when there are no crews in base.

I'm looking forward to hearing from ALL interested persons so I can requisition the necessary foodstuffs from last year's trail food inventory before it's consigned to the landfill.

LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING Y'ALL !!

Bob "Red" Renner, alumni projects coordinator, rwrenner@the-bridge.net

Mike Sawinski, Maintenance Director mike@ntier.org

President's Message

by Dave Hyink

For over seven decades the "moccasin telegraph," increasingly enhanced by modern technology, has kept Sommers Alumni in touch with one another with amazing speed and accuracy. So it was, on a mid-November morning as I watched the national news delivering the first reports of the tragic Texas A&M Bonfire collapse, that I received an e-mail informing me that one of our own, **Chris Breen ('94-'97)** was among the fatalities.

The task of organizing an effort to inform not only Chris's fellow Alumni, but also those of his older brothers **Michael ('73-'77)** and **Dennis ('74-'83)**, was a sad one. Particularly sad for me, because I had the great pleasure of knowing Chris personally.

In the tradition of the great Texas crews I had the good fortune of guiding in the 60s, Chris was a true southern gentleman. I enjoyed talking with him, and hopefully, he with me. In our conversations he spoke with pride about his family's long involvement with the Base. He spoke as well about his great pride in being an "Aggie." He spoke of his love for the Canoe Base — especially Bissett. Whatever generation gap there might have been be-

tween us was non-existent as we discussed trips and trails in the BWCAW, Quetico, White Otter and Atikaki.

Chris personified the very best of the term "Charlie Guide." His fellow staff members looked up to him; his crews and advisors looked up to him; I looked up to him! He made me glad that he was serving as a member of the Northern Tier Staff. And, he continually reaffirmed my belief, and those of the Sommers Alumni Association, that outstanding young staff members are a critically important element of our program and deserve all of the support we can muster.

Although Chris crossed his final earthly portage much too soon, in the short time he was with us he made a difference — within his family, at Texas A&M, and at the Northern Tier. I feel fortunate and proud to have known him, and confident that he will be long-remembered for the outstanding young man that he was.

To the Breen family, I offer not only my personal condolences, but those of the entire Sommers Alumni Association. We too, have lost an important member of our family.

Interpreters Wanted

Alumni can help the canoe base this summer by finding qualified interpreter applicants now. The base could use more applicants for this summer than they have to date. You can contact the base for applications and info. Joe Matson is the contact [joe@ntier.org].

Mike Sawinski comments that he'd like to see more "gray hair" on the staff. Minimum age is 16, but there is no upper age limit for hiring, you just need to pass a physical. Last year Jack Strickland (who took early retirement) worked as Business Manager, the Outfitting Manager, Gary Link, is also a retired person. This summer Gary wants to be an Interpreter, not a manager.

Joe said the base is getting ready to send hiring info to the local councils, but what the councils do with it is anyone's guess. If you participate in your local council, and carry staff applications with you, you're helping. Perhaps you'll pass out a lot more applications than are actually filled out and filed, but each

one gives you a chance of finding someone who will thank you for decades for showing them a great opportunity. Just a call to the person in your council who handles the news publications can mean that the base's ad, asking for staff, will be used when it otherwise might not have been.

You may discover that the scouts in your council are anxious to draw upon your expertise as a former Charlie's staffer. You may find you're welcome to participate in adventure programs and camping programs. You may find several very good reasons you never had before to get out in a canoe in your area. Of course, those are also great opportunities to get to know the people who might be interested in working at the base or who can help you find someone who is.

If you run out of applications, you can get more by calling the base at 218/365-4811 or by writing to PO Box 509, Ely, MN 55731. Staff applications are also online at www.holry.org.

Alumni Association Directors and Officers*

Director/President (2)**	Dave Hyink	(253) 863-6406
Director/Vice President (1)	Barry Bain	(612) 944-5178
Director/Secretary (2)**	Butch Diesslin	(218) 365-6904
Treasurer**	Nigel Cooper	(651) 738-1242
Director (3)	Patrick Cox	(847) 223-6074
Director (3)**	Dave Greenlee	(605) 594-6287
Director (3)	Chuck Rose	(320) 252-2768
Director (3)	Jay Walne	(901) 278-2633
Director (1)	John Christiansen	(417) 646-8512
Director (1)	Mark Nordstrom	(614) 833-0499
Director (1)	Linnea Renner	(218) 365-3655
Director (2)	Roy Conradi	(770) 972-8115
Director (2)	Robert Welsh	(425) 454-5628
At-large**	Michael McMahon	(651) 483-5759

*Number in parenthesis is years remaining in current term

**Executive Committee Member

Program Liaisons

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Cimarron, NM 87714
(505) 376-2281

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P.O. Box 509
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(218) 365-4811

Mr. John W. Creighton, Jr. Chairman, National High Adventure Committee
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The Curious Case of Camp Chandawaga

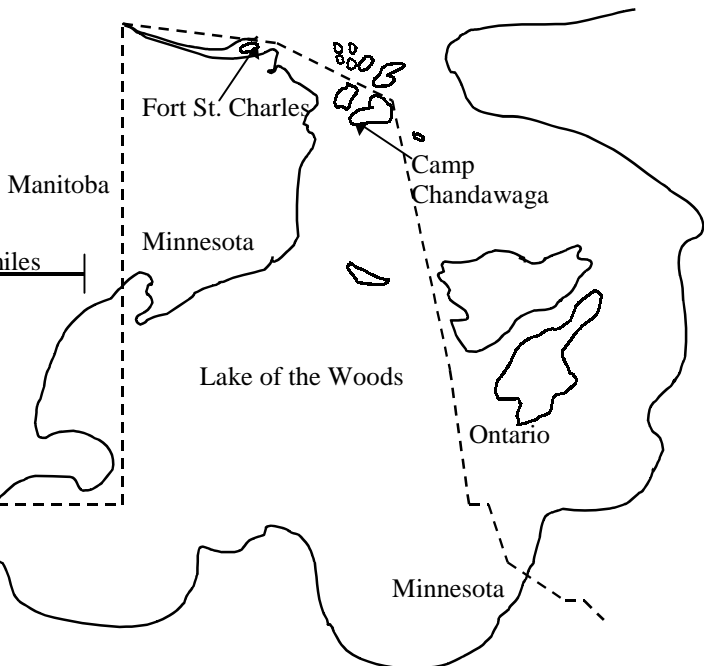
by Chuck Rose

Traveling west from the Quetico-Superior Canoe Country, downstream on the Rainy River, the Voyageurs arrived at Lake of the Woods. Straddling the Minnesota, Ontario, and Manitoba borders, it contains more islands (14,000) and shoreline (65,000 miles) than any lake in the world. Within its borders, there is more land than water surface area. Lake of the Woods is much like two lakes; the southern, mainly U.S. side called Big Traverse Bay is a large, relatively shallow (20 feet) open area with few islands. The southern shore is generally flat and marshy. Those waters are justly famous as a "walleye factory." The northern part of the lake—with places over 200 feet deep—is on the edge of the Canadian Shield geologic formation with scenery similar to the Quetico. It supports a great variety of fish including bass, lake trout, northern, walleye, and muskie. The world's oldest fish, a lake sturgeon, was taken from its depths in the 1950s. At over 200 years old, that fish was older than many of the Voyageurs when they paddled across the lake. Of all the waterways between Montreal and Lake Athabaska, Lake of the Woods was where the Voyageurs most frequently got lost.

Part of Lake of the Woods is the Northwest Angle, a chimney-shaped chunk of land on Minnesota's northern border. When the Treaty of Paris between the British and the new United States was signed after the Revolutionary War, the northern border was set as "...to the Lake of the Woods, thence through the said lake to the northwestern part thereof, and from thence on a due west course to the Mississippi." Bad map; the Mississippi is over 100 miles south, not west. Later the mistake was found and negotiations were reopened. The British proposed that the border run from Lake Superior to the Mississippi. Historian Duane Lund notes that if the British proposal had been accepted, the BWCAW as well as the Iron Range would not be part of the United States. In 1842, bargainers finally compromised, found the northwestern most point on the lake, dropped the border line to the 49th parallel and after haggling over an island or two, signed the Webster-

Ashburton treaty which also established the principle Voyageur route as the international border.

Lake of the Woods was a crossroads for Sioux, Ojibway, and Cree, with battles frequently fought to control its resources (most importantly, wild rice). European explorers, looking for furs and the Northwest Passage first came to the Lake in 1688. Pierre La Verendrye established the first trading post near the northwest corner called Fort St. Charles in 1732 intending on using it as a base for further exploration. Previously La Verendrye had built posts on Saganaga and Basswood lakes. While at Lake of the Woods, the Cree chief Ochaga sketched La Verendrye a map of the lands to the west including Lake Winnipeg. La Verendrye mistook Lake Winnipeg on the map for the Pacific Ocean and was anxious to discover the Northwest Passage. His plans were interrupted when much of his party (including his son and the Jesuit missionary Father Aulneau) were beheaded by a Sioux war party on Massacre Island near the present U.S./Canadian border. The bodies were transported back to Fort St. Charles and



The "tail" in Minnesota's northern border was drawn to include Fort St. Charles. The fort has been reconstructed and is maintained by the Knights of Columbus, they also built cabins for priests to use on vacation. People are not allowed to camp at the fort or surrounding park. Camp Chandawaga was about 10-12 miles from the fort.

pioneered became the major fur trade route west of Lake Superior.

Lumbering and mining were the next draw for white settlers. Near the turn of this century, gold was discovered; but the Lake of the Woods Gold Rush was overshadowed by the great Yukon Gold Rush. Commercial fishing—long an important part of the economy—has been phased out over the last few decades to preserve recre-

ational fisheries. Though resort fishing is the real gold of the area's economy, the maze of islands in the northern part of Lake of the Woods is a marvelous canoe country. Voyageur routes, wildlife, pictographs, logging and mining history are all there. According to George Hedrick's history of the Sommers Canoe Base, guide Chester Johnson led a crew on a week-long, Lake of

(continued on page 4)



You can barely make out Ft. Saint Charles behind the head of the scout holding the paddle. The view above him is from about the same perspective, but closer. An even closer view is at left.

properly buried. Nearly 200 years later, those skeletons were used to confirm the location of the fort which has subsequently been restored and maintained by the Knights of Columbus as a tribute to Father Aulneau, first Christian martyr in western Canada. Eventually the route that La Verendrye



A view of the inside of Ft. Saint Charles, maintained for visitors. The fort is maintained by the Knights of Columbus, they also built cabins for priests to use on vacation. People are not allowed to camp at the fort or surrounding park, apparently to let the priests have peace and quiet.

Camp Chandawaga

(continued from page 3)

the Woods trip in 1936. They rode a boat across Big Traverse Bay from Warroad, Minnesota to Oak Island then did most of their canoeing on the lake's Canadian side. They were accompanied by Peter DeJong, a Scout Executive from the Lake Agassiz Council based in Grand Forks, North Dakota; later that council merged with others to form the Northern Lights Council. In general, canoeing in the area is much like paddling some of the bigger lakes around the Quetico-Superior such as Lac La Croix. Any given day, there's a good chance of being windbound. One perceived advantage (to some) is that trips without portages are possible, though they can be sought out by crossing the Aulneau peninsula or travelling to adjacent areas such as clear, sandy Shoal Lake.

The BSA's Camp Chandawaga came into existence when the Lake Agassiz Council purchased 220 acres (for \$1.00) on southern shore of Oak Island in Lake of the Woods in 1944. The original homesteader,

Phil Smith, acted as guide for a short time. He had made his living there as a boat builder, fishing guide, school teacher, and justice of the peace. Camp Chandawaga had probably the best sand beach on the lake. The facilities consisted of three simple structures, a boat-house, a summer building on a nearby ridge (nicknamed Nightmare Inn by my troop), and Mr. Smith's winter residence about 200 yards into the woods. Just beyond the beach is a grassy area, surrounded by forest, a nice campsite. There is a trail (maintained by island residents) from the beach, leading directly to a resort grocery store on the northwest side of the island. Mr. Smith left after a few years and the Camp fell into disuse.

It was not until 1960 that the Council tried to develop a program on the property. The Council hoped that Camp Chandawaga would help create interest in the new Exploring program. Scouts came from as far away as Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Green



Scouts on a Lake of the Woods canoe trip relax near the remains of the Camp Chandawaga boat house. Camp Chandawaga was 10-12 miles from Ft. Saint Charles.

Bay, Wisconsin. However, within a few years, the experiment was abandoned and Camp Chandawaga's equipment was passed on to the council's summer camp. At least one volunteer Scouter, E. Neil Mattson of Thief River Falls, Minnesota, blames the failure on a lack of support from the Region 10 and its executive, Henry Schreiber. Mr. Mattson assumes that Camp Chandawaga was viewed as competition for Sommers. But there are at least three other reasons for its failure: location, location, and location. First, it is accessible only by float plane and boat. It was 20 water miles from the nearest road, 45 miles from the nearest towns (Warroad or Kenora, Ontario). Both people and supplies are difficult to get to the island. Second, while much of the northern portion of Lake of the Woods is island-strewn and thus canoe friendly, south of Oak Island is over 30 miles of open water. That stretch of water produces some of the biggest waves on the lake. Most of times that I've canoed to the Camp, wind and waves have been a problem. At least one other Scout

group has spent an extra night in the area because of the weather. Third, the remoteness made developing any facilities expensive. The buildings on the property were not improved or maintained. Scout troops can take wonderful canoe trips on Lake of the Woods without getting near Oak Island.

Little used, the property became more of a liability than asset; the Northern Lights Council actually discouraged troops from going there. Throughout the 1980s, the Camp Chandawaga property was on the market. No takers. They even offered it to the National BSA. With Sandy Bridges advice, they wisely, politely said no. In 1994, it was finally sold to the adjacent Laketrails camp a non-profit corporation that does run a successful canoe camping program for teenagers on Oak Island, despite the remote location. Laketrails program is relatively expensive, though. Occasionally, Laketrails has even outfitted Scout troops. As a result, Camp Chandawaga is now a distant part of Scouting history.

Any Time Work Weeks and Work Days

The alumni association's scheduled work week may not fit your schedule, but don't let that stop you. The base welcomes alumni volunteers any time during the year. Sommers Maintenance Supervisor, Mike Sawinski, has a to-do list that includes tasks that fit your interests and expertise - and you are welcome to come when it fits your schedule.

Jack and Flossie Strickland were in the area this past fall and volunteered part of a week to do some

things that were needed by the canoe base. They can tell of their positive experience.

If you are interested in spending some time as a volunteer at the base - while you are in the area fishing, skiing, enjoying the fall colors, etc. - let Mike know and he will be more than happy to find a task to fit you. Mike can be reached by calling the base (218) 365-4811, or drop him a line at mike@ntier.org, or P.O. Box 509 Ely, MN 55731-0509.

Alumni Association Looking for "Lost" Members

There are many former staffers who find the association and join, others can't find us or don't know anything about us. If you can help locate some of the former staff members and introduce them to the association, please do it soon. This is the first part of the long list of folks the association has not been able to locate. Look for the rest of the list in upcoming issues. If you see a name you know, try to find the person. Introduce them to our web site, get their address so we can send them a newsletter, let them know about the reunions.

Aasen, Doug 1968-69
Adams, Sam 1989-93
Addy, Ervin 1966
Ade, Todd 1976-77
Ahasay, Sean 1986

Akins, Don 1968-69
Allen, Bob 1961
Allinson, Charles 1988

Anderson, Bruce 1991
Anderson, Scott 1975
Applegath, Matthew 1995
Armin, Dave 1956,63
Ash, Lawry 1976-79
Babcock, John 1966

Bachman, Jim 1963
Bailey, Bruce 1970
Baker, Gregory 1956

Baker, Robert 1986
Bardon, Larry 1961-62
Barr, John 1961

Bartel, Fiona 1984
Barton, Rob 1966
Bassing, Tim 1975

Bauen, Lyle 1956
Baugh, Greg 1974
Baugh, Regina 1974

Baxter, Brad 1974
Bell, Greg 1975
Bentson, Nels 1968

Bergstrom, John 1958,59
Bernard, Gerald 1955
Bever, Michael 1984

Bigelow, Lee 1955-56
Bills, Duane 1955-56
Bishop, Eric 1980

Black, Robert 1983
Blair, Scott 1977
Blausler, Doug 1970

Boebel, Chuck 1958
Bolay, Randy 1972-72
Bolay, Rod 1971-73

Bond, Paula 1982
Bonneville, Christian 1977
Born, Vernon 1968-69

Bowlin, Stan 1975
Brashears, Bruce 1963
Braucher, Chuck 1979

Breaker, Heidi 1979
Brown, Derwin 1956
Brown, Greg 1984

Brown, Kirk 1974
Brown, Steve 1968
Burt, Jr., Robert 1985-86,1992

Butsick, Joe 1983
Byrnes, Dan 1988
Carlson, L. Monty 1955-56

Carroll, Barry 1986
Christensen, Odin 1966
Clack, Tom 1961-66

Clark, Roy 1961-63
Close, Carl 1968
Cole, Jim 1976

Collins, Hugh 1970
Collins, Jed 1966
Collins, Lee 1968

Conaway, Bill 1980,81
Cook, Craig 1991
Coombe, Charles 1986-87

Cote, Bill 1975
Courteau, Tim 1970
Courtemanche, Sylvain 1985

Crawford, John 1966
Crombie, Cameron 1978
Cross, Steve 1975

Culver, Tyler C.
Cummins, Michael 1975
Curry, Buzz 1966

Czupka, Cindy 1977
Dawson, Doug 1963
Deuchene, Dennis 1963

Deutsche, Craig 1956
Diamont, Joel 1996
Dietz, John 1968

Dinda, Patricia 1990
Dodd, J. Douglas 1969
Domimicak, Curt 1980

Donahue, John 1990
Dotson, Dennis 1963
Dovre, Erik 1982

Dunnigan, Dennis 1963
Durkee, Phil 1960-92
Earl, Dennis 1980

Earle, Peter 1963
Edwards, Jeff 1962
Elfelt, Stephen 1985

Elias, Charles 1986-87
Ellingson, Ken 1960-66
Elrod, Scott 1990

Else, Kathy 1975
Eng, Patrick 1991
Etcheson, Steve 1966

Ettner, John 1952
Evans, Vincent 1968-70
Fago, Cliff 1955

Farmer, Danny 1990-92
Felton, David 1978
Ferdinand, Lorrin 1986-87

Ferguson, Malcolm 1980
Ferris, John 1962
Fladmark, Sally 1976-77

Christopher David Breen

Chris was born in Austin, Texas on March 18, 1974 and died in the collapse of the Bonfire in College Station, Texas on November 18, 1999. Chris was a 1992 graduate of Anderson High School and a 1997 graduate of Texas A&M.

Chris was serving as an Aggie alumni volunteer assisting with the construction of the annual Texas A&M Bonfire. He was standing atop the 4th level of the Bonfire when the collapse occurred and was killed instantly.

Chris lived a life devoted to his family. He was dedicated to the outdoors and to youth service projects. He was an Eagle Scout and had worked 1994-1997 as a canoe guide at the Sommers Canoe Base. He was a member of the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets from September 1992 to May 1996. The students chose him in his senior year as the Senior Coordinator of the Aggie Bonfire as a Brown Pot. He also was a member of the Texas A&M Pistol Team, Sailing Club, Wildlife Biology Association and Catholic Student Association.

After graduation he had worked in Harwood, Texas and at the time of his death he was working in Austin.

Chris was a natural leader and well liked by the scout groups who he introduced to the wilderness experience in Minnesota, Ontario and Manitoba. Numerous scout leaders wrote his parents to cite the extraordinary nature of his leadership.

He is survived by his parents, John E. and Marian K. Breen of Austin; three brothers Michael T.



and his wife Anna Lozano, Dennis P. and his wife Carol of Los Andes, Chile, Sean E. and his wife Roslyn, and three sisters Mary L. of Dallas, Sheila and Edward Peters of Austin and Kerry T. Breen of Washington DC. He is also survived by 4 nieces and 5 nephews. Chris will be missed most by a host of friends and buddies at Texas A&M and especially by his close friend, Jana McCormick. Chris' brothers were Charlie Guides: Mike, in 1973-1977; Dennis, in 1974-83.

The family requests donations to the St. Mary's Catholic Center, 603 Church Avenue, College Station, TX 77840 or to the Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, PO Box 428, Ely, MN 55731-0428.

Mr. & Mrs. John E. Breen
Mr. Dennis Breen
8603 Azalea Tr.
Austin, TX 78759

Dr. Michael T. Breen
3100 Above Stratford Pl.
Austin, TX 78746

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

The Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association Inc. Saturday, January 15, 2000 Convened at the Ely United Methodist Church, Ely, MN 55731

Executive Committee Members Present: Nigel Cooper, Butch Diesslin, Dave Hyink, Michael McMahon
Executive Committee Members Absent: Dave Greenlee
Others Present: Pat Cox, Doug Hirdler, Bob Renner, Chuck Rose, Craig Pendergraft

The meeting was called to order at 2:33 P.M. by President Hyink. The Executive committee members present constituted a quorum.

Crossing Portages - The Journey Continues (2000-2004) This is the association's primary source of project money. Craig Pendergraft will be heading up the next five-year annual giving campaign, with assistance from Dave Hyink and Jay Walne. President Hyink reported a 97% pledge fulfillment on the 1997-2000 program. Craig gave

plans for the coming campaign.

Rendezvous 2000 - September 1-4, 2000. Pat Cox, Event Coordinator, reported that reservations have been made at the Holiday Inn - SunSpree in Ely for the Saturday evening banquet, a block of rooms have been reserved. Robert Olson, son of Sig Olson and 1942 Sommers staff member has agreed to be banquet speaker. Information will be in the upcoming newsletter.

2000 Annual Meeting. The Sommers Alumni Association's annual membership meeting will be **1:30 P.M., Saturday September 2, 2000 in The Lodge at Sommers Canoe Base.**

Election of Directors. The Director terms of Barry Bain, John Christiansen, Mark Nordstrom and Linnea Renner expire at the 2000 Annual Meeting. The nominating committee for director elections is composed of Pat Cox, Dave Greenlee, Chuck Rose and Jay Walne. Members wishing to nominate director candidates should con-

tact one of the nominating committee members.

Seasonal Staff Training. Due to the capacity of facilities and the size of the staff, the seasonal staff training at Sommers will held in three phases: "Train The Trainer" followed by two shifts of staff training, with the first and second shifts linked by a common trip to Old Fort William. Alumni are encouraged to assist with the staff training. Those interested should contact Craig Pendergraft and/or Terry Schocke. See the Nor'wester Staff Training article on this page for all the details.

Alumni Work Week. The scheduled Alumni Work Week will be May 27-June 4, 2000 at the Atikokan Base. Alumni interested in participating should contact Bob Renner. Alumni willing to volunteer are encouraged to do so any time during the year. The Sommers

base has a list of identified tasks to suit all time lengths, interests and levels of expertise. Alumni are encouraged to contact Mike Sawinski at Sommers to arrange volunteer opportunities.

Seasonal Staff Support. It was agreed that the alumni association will continue its support of the seasonal staff by providing each new staff member with a copy of "A Diamond in the North". In addition - first-year staff will receive a credit at the base Trading Post, second-year staff will receive a custom-made Meany canoe paddle, third-year staff will receive a custom guide pack, and fourth-year staff receive a custom fillet knife.

Association Membership Report. Butch Diesslin reported that membership growth has slowed. Non-members outnumber members by 3 to 1. Assistance is needed from

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Tidbits on the Sommers Clan

Barry Bain ('57-62) has retired from teaching.

Scott Black ('63) contacted the association to let us know that rumors of his being dead are not true. [sblackjr@aol.com]. Scott is a project Development Manager, living in Saltillo, MS.

Jerry Cox ('57-63) retired in December, 1999, after teaching high school for 34 years. (glcox@eta.k12.mn.us)

Jeff "Ole" Dahl ('69-73) has a new e-mail address jeffrey.dahl@aloha.net.

Aaron Hall ('93) is now living in Albuquerque, NM.

Tom Holleran ('80-82) has moved to 1703 N. Chestnut #107, Marshfield, WI 54449-1407; 715-486-8010. "Brooke" is a Retail Manager.

Mikko Lamminpaa ('84,'86-88,'90,'97) is in Dun Laoghaire, County Dublin, Ireland until May, 2000, working for the Food and Veterinary Office of the European Commission.

(mikko.lamminpaa@cec.eu.int; mikko.lamminpaa@sci.fi) Thanks Mikko, for the info on the Alumni in Finland!

Virpi Lamminpaa ('88,'94) is a Information Technology Assistant for Nokia Communications. She is planning to spend the coming summer at The Base. (varpi.vayrynen@nokia.com; vivayryn@sci.fi)

Congratulations to Anne Lyly ('92) and Jussi Lyly ('84,'87-'88,'92) on the birth of Triplets - daughter Kerttu, and identical sons Valtteri and Verner. They join their older sister Iida.

Kurt Muller ('84) is a PhD, researcher, at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. (muller@psyka.jyu.fi)

Ken B. Peterson ('68-69) lives in Birchwood, MN and is Funeral Director and Owner of Johnson-Peterson Mortuary in St. Paul. Ken "found" the alumni association and included his Life membership dues with his address.

Kai Puustinen ('89 OKPIK) (veini@sci.fi) is the Editor-in-Chief of Finland's first outdoor magazine.

Bob Rasmussen ('56) is a Professor at Humboldt State U, Bayside, CA, rar1@axe.humboldt.edu

Randall P. Schwalbach ('82) has moved to PO Box 693, Wautoma, WI 54982; (920) 787-1327. "Pierre" is a Writer.

Jay Walne ('70-72) has moved to 145 Hillwood Lane, Collierville, TN 38017, (901) 854-4947.

Joe Seliga is in the February 2000 issue of "Wooden Boat."

Send your "Tid-Bits" to SAA at P.O. Box 428, Ely, MN 55731-0428 or to Butch Diesslin via e-mail at: b.diesslin@mail.vcc.mnscu.edu for inclusion in the next issue to be printed.

2000 Nor'wester Staff Training

by Mike Holdgrafer

Terry Schocke, Director of Programs for the Northern Tier High Adventure Bases, has announced the 2000 Nor'wester staff training schedule for this summer. Training will be conducted simultaneously at the Atikokan and Ely Bases to accommodate the large number of staff. Don MacDonald, Director of Canadian Operations, will lead the Atikokan training for staff members assigned to Atikokan and Bissett. Staff will arrive at both bases, beginning May 31 through June 1. Eight brigades will start training at the Ely base on June 2; training at Atikokan will start on June 1. Three additional brigades at Ely will start training five days.

On June 10 - 11, all of the brigades from both Atikokan and Ely will meet for a rendezvous at Old Fort William, to enrich the staff's knowledge of the fur trade history. Training will end on June 10 for the Atikokan brigades and the eight Ely brigades, but will continue for the three additional Ely brigades that started training later.

Continuing the emphasis of hands-on training in the woods, swamper trips are planned for the staff training. Each training brigade will be led by an experienced seasonal staff member, who will serve as the brigade leader, and be supported by an assistant brigade leader. As in prior years, the SAA is engaged in a cooperative venture to assist the Base in its training efforts and we are looking for inter-

ested SAA members to serve as resource advisors during the swamper trips and/or to assist in training on either base. In particular, Don MacDonald is looking for SAA volunteers who guided from the Bissett and Atikokan bases as he heads up his Canadian training. SAA volunteers who participate in a swamper trip must provide a Class III medical, signed by a physician within the twelve months prior to the swamper trip.

The presence of volunteers who willingly share their knowledge, experience and expertise dramatically enhances the quality of the brigade training. In the past two years, the number of staff has risen markedly. So meaningful opportunities for SAA members to participate in training have also increased. There may be no better avenue available to SAA members to influence the lives of the next generation of Charlie Guides, while fostering the tradition of "stern seat" professionalism that raises the Northern Tier Program above all others. Check your calendars and join other SAA members this June. Whether you "dip your paddle" and join fellow SAA volunteers for one day or more, it will be a rewarding time.

Please contact Craig Pendergraft or Mike Holdgrafer to sign up or for more details. Craig: 650-506-4185 or at capender@oracle.us.com. Mike: 918-669-3048 or mholdgrafer@dollar.com.

June 14, 1994, Third Day in Minnesota, First day on the Trail

From the 1994 Northern Tier Diary of Christopher Thurman

Finally, after working on the base for two days fixing tents, weed eating, counting buckets, and doing the daily duty I am going on my Swamper training trip. The summer is just about to start for me; this is why I flew from Georgia to work here, to canoe. The official canoe season started a week or so ago, but there are a few new interpreters who came late, because of school, like I did. In total there are eight new "Charlie Guides" going on this training trip, this Swamper. Our instructor, Dan, from Iowa, seems very confident that we'll have a good trip.

We started this morning learning what foods we would take and how to pack them. It takes two-to-three hours to prepare and pack. The weight of these packs is unreal, very heavy, but will get lighter as the trip rolls on. I am real surprised at the kind of food we will take: good veggies, meats, and tasty cakes. The food is not as bland as I thought it might be. Food-wise, this summer should be very good. Next we went to the Bay Post and packed our equipment pack or kettle pack with our pots, pans, water buckets (which we have plenty of 'cause I counted them yesterday), tents, tarp, dish washing stuff, coffee pot (a must), and bear rope (which we will learn how to use tonight). The pack is somewhat heavy, but that's to be expected.

After lunch a thunderstorm hit the base. During the storm we were sent off to our cabins and to our lockers to pack our personal stuff. Three people were assigned to one personal pack. At first it did not look like we would fit all our stuff in one bag. But after eliminating some things and finding other things the three of us could share, we had our bag packed. Likewise with the rest of our group. Next we headed to pick up our food pack and kettle pack. Then it was off to the canoe yard to pick out three canoes. At the canoe yard Dan showed us how to pick up and carry a canoe. After each one of us tried it we were ready to start the trip. However, we did not get to dip our paddles right away. Dan told us we would start our trip by portaging to Flash Lake. A little disappointed, yes. The group divvied up the packs and canoes so that each of us had one thing to carry. I was carrying the kettle pack.. Once everyone had some-

thing to carry we headed for Flash Lake.

The trail to Flash Lake seemed to get longer and longer as we hiked. Once we entered the woods the bugs started their attack on us which made the trail longer. Those of the group in better shape were quickly out of sight. I soon found myself walking all alone. There were six ahead of me and two behind me, somewhere. I told myself not to worry. I knew I was not in the best shape, just relax and keep walking at a steady pace and I would soon be at the lake. However, the trail just got longer and the pack heavier.

I had been walking alone for about 10 minutes when I realized I was not alone after all. I noticed some movement out of the corner of my right eye, so I stopped to see what it was. The vegetation around me was fairly thick, but I picked out a black blur coming at me. "What could that be?" I thought "a dog?" Now I'm from southern Georgia, where it is not uncommon to see a dog running around in the

woods. However, when my "dog" jumped over a bush I realized that the black blur was not a dog, but a black bear. I froze I was in shock, but was unaware at the time that I was in shock. Here I was a boy, just out of my first year at West Georgia College all alone staring at an animal that I had only seen in zoos, but this one was running at me. What was I going to do?

I'd hiked on the Appalachian Trail before near the Smokies and was told by my scoutmaster, never run from a black bear because it might think you're food and continue to chase you.. He told me that black bears false-charge and if a person does not move, then the bear would think that the person was a greater threat it than it is, and it would retreat. Somehow I remembered that, but even if I had not, I was not going anywhere. I could not. I froze still. Then something inside of me told me to speak. I can't know why, there was no one around to hear me, but I had to say something, so I did. The only words

that would come from my mouth were "Damn a Bear!" I did not shout that, I just spoke in a loud voice. When the bear heard me, she stopped running at me. Only about 30 yards and some brush separated us. She then stood up on her back legs, looked at me and yawned. I knew that she was a female because right as she stood up I noticed two cubs climbing a tree about 20 yards behind her. After she yawned she turned and went over to the tree that her cubs were in and climbed it as well. That's when I came to. I took a deep breath and sighed with relief. Then I remembered the two guys behind me. I had to wait for them so that nothing would happen to them. I only had to wait a couple of minutes for them to come along. I told them there was a bear nearby and we should leave quickly, so we did. It did not take us long after that to reach the lake and the rest of the group. I told the others my story and made it clear that we would be camping on the other side of the lake.

Questions Most Asked by Youngsters at Northern Tier And some Rather Odd Questions Compiled by the 1994 Summer Staff

- How deep is the lake? (This is asked on every lake I think)
 - Are these lakes man made?
 - Is it going to rain?
 - How many bears, moose, deer, women will we see?
 - If I go swimming now will my clothes be dry by supertime?
 - Is there good fishin' here?
 - What lake is this?
 - How long is the next portage?
 - How much snow do you get up here in the winter?
 - What is the average depth of the lakes up here?
 - (At breakfast) What's for dinner?
 - Do we have to swamp the canoes?
 - How far to the next portage?
 - Will this be a good portage or a bad one?
 - What time are we getting up?
 - How cold will it get?
 - When does the sun rise?
 - How much money do you make?
 - Is this a rain or a sprinkle?
 - How fast are we going?
 - How many people go through the BWCAW every year?
 - How heavy are the packs?
 - Do you have a girlfriend?
 - What happens if we get lost?
 - Where are we?
 - What happens if you get hurt?
 - Will we see the Northern Lights?
 - Can we eat the fish?
 - I just caught this fish, what do you want do with it?
 - Do the Boy Scouts own all of this?
 - Do I have to get my feet wet?
 - Is this still Moose Lake?
 - If we drink the water straight will we get Gonorrhoea? (Ha, ha)
 - What's the best stuff to fish with?
 - Do we need to put up the bear bag on an island?
 - Do these lakes freeze in the winter?
 - Can you skate on the lakes?
 - If I hurt myself on purpose will I get to ride in a plane?
 - Why can't we get back to the base before 3:00 p.m.?
 - Can we use the radio to listen to other people?
 - What do I do with my clothes?
 - Are the showers going to work?
 - Do we have to put film in the bear bag?
 - How many lakes will we see?
 - Are we in Canada yet?
 - Why does Canada look the same as Minnesota?
 - How long did it take to build the lodge?
 - Is this the last portage?
 - Have you ever been to Philmont?
 - What do I do if I have to use the restroom and we are out on the water?
 - Are these waters patrolled by the US Coast Guard?
 - Where are the border patrol boats?
 - Have you ever seen a Mounty?
 - Where are the Mounties?
 - What's the longest time you've seen a loon stay underwater?
 - Will we paddle if it's raining?
 - Do we have to peel the peas?
 - What is the brown thing on the Northern Tier Sticker?
 - Can you go into Canada alone?
 - Why doesn't everyone come off the water at different times?
- Oh these questions do bring back a lot of memories.

SOMMERS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 428
ELY MN 55731



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Crossing Portages Finance Campaign (2000-2004) Coming Soon

The first phase of the five-year (1994-99) Crossing Portages: *Sharing the Load* financial campaign is "in the books." With sincere thanks to Chairman **Jay Walne**, we raised close to \$100,000 dollars to fund the day-to-day operations of the Association.

In keeping with the over-arching goals of the Sommers Alumni Association, the funds were used to promote and enhance Canoe Base program and operations, as well as to help recruit, train and retain seasonal staff.

In support of our seasonal staff, the Association provides a copy of **Gene Felton's, A Diamond in the North**, to each new staff member. Other items provided to seasonal staff include: a Trading Post gift certificate to first-year staff to help them outfit themselves for the trail, a custom paddle by Don Meany for second-year staff, a Kontos guide pack embroidered with the recipient's name for third-year staff, and a Grohmann-Russell filet knife for fourth year staff.

In support of the Northern Tier Seasonal Staff Scholarship Program, to further encourage retention and recruitment, the Association funded five seasonal scholarships per year to qualified returning staff. Available scholarships are: \$500, \$1000, and \$1500 for second, third, and fourth-year staff members, respectively.

Operating funds were also used to fund several small capital projects. These included renovating and upgrading the Lodge, building two first-night cabins in 1995, and construction of one off-road cabin in 1999. Additionally, funds were used to help restore the Canoe Base to some semblance of order after the "4th of July Windstorm" in 1999.

The second phase (2000-2004) of the Crossing Portages campaign: *The Journey Continues*, kicks-off in a few weeks. The SAA Executive Committee appointed **Craig Pendergraft** to chair this most important endeavor. In keeping with our increasing membership,

coupled with an ever-increasing need for our support, the Directors have set a goal of doubling the amount raised in our 1994-99 campaign. Soon, you will be given the

opportunity to participate.

We look forward to your enthusiastic involvement as, together, we continue Crossing Portages, *The Journey Continues*.

Executive Meeting Minutes

(continued from page 6)

the association members to encourage contemporaries to join the association. Assistance is also needed to locate almost 500 "Lost" staff alumni. Ideas are being sought for new or additional membership recognition items.

Association Awards. Nominations are being sought for the George D. Hedrick Memorial Service Award. Nominations should be sent to the alumni address by June 1, 2000. Nominations should include rationale and justification of the nominee's volunteer service to Northern Tier. Mike Holdgrafer will be bringing a proposal to the 2000 annual membership meeting for the establishment of an additional recognition award.

Communications. The association will continue to publish three issues of the "Reflections" newsletter per year. Members are encouraged to submit articles. The association's Internet web page [www.holry.org] is being accessed about 10-11,000 times per month. New material is being added to the site.

Leadership Succession Planning. The alumni association leadership discussed the need to have members of all ages in the leadership of the organization, to ensure the continuity of the organization.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Blaine "Butch" Diesslin, Assn. Secretary



**Sommers Alumni Association's
Rendezvous 2000
Celebration of Scout Canoeing**



Registration Form

Submit by July 31

Return Registration and payment to:

Patrick Cox
1011 S. Sycamore
Palestine, TX 75801

Contact information to reach Pat:

Home Phone: 847-223-6074

E-Mail: patrick.cox@kemperinsurance.com

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: (H) _____ (W) _____

Housing Options

- Option 1) Cabin accommodations at the Base on a first-come, first-served basis for available space. You will need to bring your own bedding and towels. For fee see registration below. Space is assigned at check in on the first day of the event. Special requests are on a space available basis only.
- Option 2) Arrange for off-base accommodations on your own. There are several local hotels. The host of our Rendezvous '00 Banquet on Saturday night is the Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort at (218) 365-6565. Holiday Inn has agreed to hold a block of ten rooms until July 15, 2000. Rate is \$99.00 per night plus taxes.

Your registration includes one Rendezvous '00 T-shirt. Please see the next page to specify size and for information on how to order extra shirts.

Rendezvous '98 T-shirt

Your registration includes one Rendezvous '00 T-shirt. Additional shirts may be ordered later in this form.

Circle your size: S M L XL XXL XXXL

Just some questions to help us make better plans

Would you like to have us arrange for a baby sitter during the banquet? Yes / No

Would you like us to arrange for older children's activities? Yes / No

Are you interested in the fur trade theme? Yes / No

Would you be interested in purchase of Voyageur clothing? Yes / No

Would you and/or your family be willing to participate as Voyageur actors in a reenactment? Yes / No

Would you be willing to participate in fur trade skits/stories/songs? Yes / No

Housing, Meals & Registration

Day/Date	Item or Event	Number of People	Per Person Cost	Total
	Registration	Family	\$35 Total	
		Individual	\$25 Total	_____
Friday 09/01/2000	Supper - Adult	_____	\$5.00	_____
	Supper - Child*	_____	\$2.50	_____
	Overnight Stay	_____	\$2.00	_____
Saturday 09/02/2000	Breakfast - Adult	_____	\$3.00	_____
	Breakfast - Child*	_____	\$1.50	_____
	Lunch - Adult	_____	\$4.00	_____
	Lunch - Child	_____	\$2.00	_____
	Supper - Adult	Not Available	N/A	N/A
	Supper - Child*	Not Available	N/A	N/A
	Reunion Gathering	_____	_____	_____
Adult	_____	\$20.00	_____	
Child*	_____	\$15.00	_____	
	Overnight Stay	_____	\$2.00	_____
Sunday 09/03/2000	Breakfast - Adult	_____	\$3.00	_____
	Breakfast - Child*	_____	\$1.50	_____
	Lunch - Adult	_____	\$4.00	_____
	Lunch - Child	_____	\$2.00	_____
	Supper - Adult	_____	\$5.00	_____
	Supper - Child*	_____	\$2.50	_____
	Overnight Stay	_____	\$2.00	_____
Monday 09/04/2000	Breakfast - Adult	_____	\$3.00	_____
	Breakfast - Child*	_____	\$1.50	_____
	Lunch - Adult	_____	\$4.00	_____
	Lunch - Child	_____	\$2.00	_____
	Overnight Stay	Not Available	N/A	N/A

Total Meals & Lodging

\$

* Child is defined as less than or equal to 11 years of age as of 1/1/00.
Age of 12 or greater is on adult rates.

Requests for families to occupy a cabin privately will be honored to
the extent we can. No guarantees as beds are limited.

Adult and child overnight cost is the same.

T-Shirts and Such

Item	Sizes	Quantity Desired	Per Item Cost	Total
T-Shirts	Sm	<hr/>	\$12.00	<hr/>
	Med	<hr/>	\$12.00	<hr/>
	Lg	<hr/>	\$12.00	<hr/>
	X-Lg	<hr/>	\$12.00	<hr/>
	XX-Lg	<hr/>	\$12.00	<hr/>
	XXX-Lg	<hr/>	\$12.00	<hr/>
Polo	Sm	<hr/>	\$30.00	<hr/>
	Med	<hr/>	\$30.00	<hr/>
	Lg	<hr/>	\$30.00	<hr/>
	X-Lg	<hr/>	\$30.00	<hr/>
	XX-Lg	<hr/>	\$30.00	<hr/>
	XXX-Lg	<hr/>	\$30.00	<hr/>
Red Jac Shirt w/ SAA Logo**	Sm	<hr/>	\$100.00	<hr/>
	Med	<hr/>	\$100.00	<hr/>
	Lg	<hr/>	\$100.00	<hr/>
	X-Lg	<hr/>	\$100.00	<hr/>
	XX-Lg	<hr/>	\$100.00	<hr/>
Special Knife	N/A	<hr/>	\$29.00	<hr/>

Total T-shirts and Such Page	\$
Total Meals & Lodging	\$
Grand Total*	\$

* Please enclose a check in this amount payable to "Sommers Alumni Association".