



REFLECTIONS



SOMMERS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

RENDEZVOUS 2006!



*Evan Durland, Tom Copeland
and Brian Dobry*

The 2006 SAA Reunion Committee is proud to announce that the HUDSON BAY BOYS will be the feature presentation at our next reunion banquet to be held at the Grand Ely Lodge in Ely MN on September 2, 2006. The HUDSON BAY BOYS are Northern Tier alumnus; Evan Durland, Tom Copeland and Brian Dobry. They will share with us photos and stories of their summer of 2005 expedition from Lake

Superior to Hudson Bay.
www.hudsonbayboys.com

Plans are well under way for an event filled Rendezvous the weekend of September 1 to 4, 2006. Our banquet will feature SAA Alumni, Mike Ziegahn, flamenco and classical guitarist, who will premier an original composition as part of the background music during our social hour outside under a party tent overlooking



Mike Ziegahn

Shagawa Lake at the Grand Ely Lodge.

The Reunion has been combined with the Red Renner Work Week. The Work Week will start the Sunday before the reunion. We invite and encourage participation in both events; you have the opportunity to register for the entire "Work Week and Reunion" or just the Reunion. There will be some fun events at work week including: an "Old Fashioned Steak Fry" hosted by Butch Diesslin and "Breakfast at the Old Cary-Hall Cabin hosted by Barb Cary-Hall.

Other activities in the works include, Craftsman Demonstrations:

- Chainsaw Art
- Log Furniture
- Stone Carving

- Group Paddle/ Voyageur Paddle
- Blow Down Tour
- Reforestation Ecology Hike
- Listening Point Tours Campfire
- Storytelling and Music

These are just the highlights of the many activities in the works.

We invite you to call all your alum buddies and "get em here". Plan on bringing your photos and trail memorabilia for a by decade display. There will be plenty of venues and opportunities for showing pictures and sharing memories and in general reveling in the camaraderie of our shared experience of being part of the great tradition of Northern Tier.

Start Planning Now!

SUBMISSIONS TO:

REFLECTIONS

c/o Mike Bingley
233C - 3250 Rock City Rd
Nanaimo, BC, Canada
V9T 4R2

Phone: 250-756-4087

or email in MS Word or Plain Text to:

mbingley@telusplanet.net
with the subject line
"Reflections"

Pictures are appreciated
in high quality .jpg
format or by snail mail.

**DEADLINE for next
issue is - March 17th**

2006 Alumni Work Week Opportunities

Alumni Work Week will be held in two locations this spring, both coinciding with training weeks for our seasonal staff. Both Atikokan and Ely will have opportunities for alumni "sweat equity" in the Northern Tier bases. Work at Atikokan will focus on a much-needed renovation of the Staff Lounge, including: new windows, deck

improvement and screen porch addition. Interior work on the lounge will include: moving the bathroom, enlarging and upgrading the computer area, and floor, wall and ceiling renovation. **Work week at Atikokan will be May 27 - June 2, 2006.**

Work week at Ely is June 2 - 10, 2006 and will involve: interior cleaning and

restoration of the Lodge building. This large project started in 2004 and is scheduled for completion in 2007, and is intended to preserve and enhance the Lodge as a museum and interpretive center for the base. A second work week opportunity on this project will be held in the

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President's Message

by Patrick Cox

We were all once young men and women who arrived in Ely, Atikokan, and Bissett with a little trepidation and a lot of confidence for we were Charlie Guides. After being broken down and rebuilt during Swamper training and some form of Swamper trip, we emerged green guides who now knew enough to be frightened of the imminent arrival of our first crew.

You may ask why I bring you this thought. In the last few months, I heard from the daughter of one of the assistant base directors during my guiding days (Dennis "Wog" Wogaman). It came out of nowhere. That is one of the real pleasures of this job. You hear from people whose name you may have heard or who you once knew but have not seen or spoken to in years. Dennis' daughter (Johanna) was planning a 25th anniversary party for her parents (Dennis and Sharon). My first thought was that it could not have been 25 years but then I realized, yes, it had been in fact 25 years. Then, a few weeks later, I heard from her father. Dennis wrote me a note out of the blue. We've exchanged a few notes and swapped a few stories – and Dennis probably remembers now that I can hold forth for far longer than the audience has desire to listen – a trait that I happily share with some other famous talkers including the late Sandy Bridges and

Tom "Babbling Brook" Holleran among others. I've encouraged Dennis to come to the next reunion - Rendezvous 2006. He thinks he might. I sure hope he does – it will be good to see him.

That brings me to the point finally.... Reunion is coming this year. I strongly encourage each of you whatever your era of being a Charlie Guide to think seriously about attending and to encourage others you know to attend. Pick up the phone and call that friend you made all those years ago up at Charlie's Place in Ely, Atikokan, and Bissett and suggest he or she attend – you can compare gray hair or place bets on who will get the first gray hair in your generation of Charlie Guides. It is always good fun. We have a group of people working very hard to make it a memorable event (thank you all for your dedication so far – Larry Hanson, Barb Cary Hall, Dick Shank, Allen Rensch and Chuck Rose). We will have Red Renner Memorial Work Week scheduled for the week before the reunion so you can come for a few days and stay a while. There will also be canoe trip options before and after the reunion.

See you this fall. And, to borrow and paraphrase a poem with special meaning to us all, until then – may wind be always at your back.

Director Nominations Open

Each year, the SAA elects four persons to serve as directors of the Association. Nominations should be sent to:

Chuck Rose, Secretary
Box 428, Ely, MN 55731
or clrose@stcloudstate.edu or 320-252-2768.

Directors and Officers

Director (3)	Mike Bingley	(250) 756-4087
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Number in parenthesis is years remaining in current term

*Executive Committee Member

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Sharon Girard	Production Artist

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MOVING? Please let the Alumni Association know so they can update the Alumni database. Please provide 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 Chuck Rose clrose@stcloudstate.edu. **The US Postal Service will forward your newsletter to you - HOWEVER – they do it at the Alumni Association's expense!** The statement "Address Services Requested" on the newsletter tells the USPS that we want them to forward your newsletter so you don't miss an issue. It also provides us with your new address. For each issue we have between 50-100 address corrections that we pay \$.80 a piece to the USPS for this service. Please help us reduce this cost to the Association!

Editor's Comments

by Mike Bingley

One of the things I love about Scouting is that it's one of the few movements in existence today that is without time or place. As I was transcribing Dave Trampe's article about his adventures with Ron Walls during the late 50s and early 60s I got thinking to myself "boy, I'll bet Joe and Don will be annoyed when they read this . . ." and then I realized that when these adventures happened Don was about two years old and I'm not sure Joe was even born.

We've all had our adventures and misadventures at the base. Be it climbing radio towers, minor acts of unscout-like behaviour or occasionally rolling a base vehicle on a winding road, it's all been done before.

Of course, mischief is not the only timeless part of Scouting. I go to reunions so that I can trade stories about Scouts in my care with people who have the same basic sto-

ries that happened fifty years earlier, around the same time or even a few years after I was there.

I'm always a little bit sad to not see as many faces as I would like from my time at the base at reunions though. I would like to raise a challenge for all those folks who worked at the base during the late 90s – come back! It's been at least five years since I've seen some of you and boy would it be good to see some of you. Yes, this includes those folks who get together every year already for gatherings that end up with names like "Charlie Gras" – why not schedule your annual canoe trip to coincide with the rendezvous?

In this issue, you'll find information about when and where the rendezvous will be happening. I, for one, hope to see you there!

Keep the curvy side down!

Bing

Additional Contributions to Crossing Portages 2005-2009



SAA members making a financial commitment to "Making a Difference" in the most recent quarter include: **Michael Clayburn, Pat Friedl, Pat Furey, Roderick Garlitz, Robert Rassmussen, Keith Gallaway, Dave Nachtsheim, David Bird,**

Donnie Tegeler, John Duke, Don Melander, Jim Hood, David Sheffield, Jim Cole, Mark DeLinde, Lee Sessions, Bob Suter and Lorri Hanson. Every contribution – large or small – helps us make a difference in the delivery of a quality wilderness experience for young people in Scouting. Please consider making your pledge today, either by returning the pledge form you received earlier this year or by down-loading a new one from www.holry.org.

Joe Seliga Passes Away

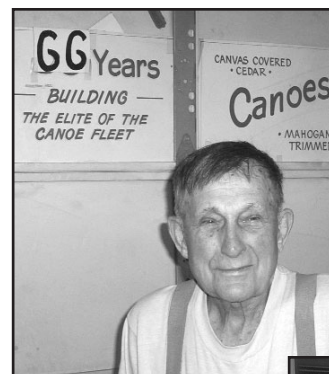
Joe passed away, peacefully, in his sleep on Sunday December 18th. His daughters, Nancy and Joanne were with him at his home in Ely.

There is a fund in his and Nora's remembrance at Widjiwagan, "The Joe and Nora Seliga Canoe Fund" that has been set up for a while to accommodate any donations, in lieu of flowers. Joe will be cremated soon, according to Nancy, and a memorial service is being planned by the family with exact date TBA for early summer.

Our most heartfelt thoughts and prayers go out this morning to Nancy and Timmy, Joanne, and the entire Seliga family for their loss. I am quite sure that Joe has that incredible smile on his face this day, as he joined Nora and together they glance below to the enormous legacy they have left behind.

It is Nancy's sincerest wishes this morning that this message of their loss

be spread to all of the "Charlie's Guides" thru our networking of Hol-ry's.



Special Seliga Memorial Edition

The Spring edition of Reflections will be dedicated to the memory of Joe and it is our hope to be able to include as many stories, anecdotes and memories of him in that edition. So that we can compile the newsletter, please note that the deadline is March 17th, 2006.

(Continued from page 1)

2006 Alumni Work Week Opportunities

week before the 2006 Reunion in September of this year.

Meals and accommodations on the bases will be provided at no cost. You'll have the added bonus of participation in training week activities as your interest and time per-

mit, and also a chance to meet and interact with current seasonal staff as well as fellow alumni. Bring your skills and/or enthusiasm; on the job training will be provided. We can use help for a day or a week, so come as early and stay as late as you can!

For more information, contact: Dick Shank (richard.shank@allina.com), at (651)-698-5375, or contact any of the Sommers Alumni directors. ■

XY Paddles Survive Hurricane Katrina

by Mike McKinnon



When Hurricane Katrina struck Louisiana, the city of Hammond – just north of Lake Ponchartrain (New Orleans is just south of the lake) – was devastated.

Tom Wingo's home in that city was struck by the 30-foot tidal surge, with 30-foot waves on top of that, and 200 km per hour winds.

"Needless to say, all that was left of my home was the concrete foundation. We have only found a small cardboard box of personal belongings," he says.

The Wingos are among the fortunate in southern Louisiana these days, though: the family is alive and well, and insurance will cover the loss of their home.

But one thing out of all the disaster stands out for them.

"The really wild part of all this is that I have found all four of my XY paddles intact, with only minor scratches," he told the Meanys in an e-mail last week. The Wingos found them widely scattered,

about a mile back in the woods behind their house.

"They were in a closet on the second floor [when the storm struck]. So not only did they survive the hurricane, tidal surge and waves, they also survived the break-up of the house."

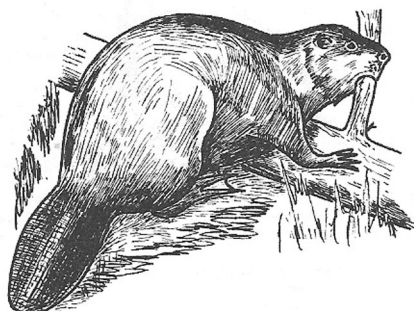
Among the few other family possessions the Wingos were able to recover was a Hudson Bay blanket – dirty, but without a thread out of place.

"I am at a complete loss as to why all four of my paddles survived... I found one of my carbon-fibre kayak paddles that was shredded," wrote Wingo. "Must be the Canadian craftsmanship."

The last paddle the Wingos found had the most sentimental value for them. It was their first XY paddle – brought home by their son after a stay at the Northern Tier Boy Scout Camp here.

"I have enjoyed my paddles a lot over the years... Thanks for building such a great paddle. They are real keepsakes now," Wingo told the Meanys. "I always thought my XY paddles were great... Now we know."

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A "Bad '60s Trip "

by Bob Vouk

Water levels were still very high in late June 1962 when I guided my first crew of the season from Rantoul AFB, Illinois on a rather ambitious trip out to Jean and Sturgeon and down the Moline River. It was a crew of 14 or 15, the group size limit in those days. We had drawn a couple brand new 18 foot Grummans. The trip had gone well and we had now been out four days. Then, descending the Moline early the morning of the fifth day, we began to experience some fast water so with life jackets on and gear well stowed, we prepared to descend the first riffle. I went first in the Selega and pulled into a backwater. The second canoe followed. The third canoe, with three scouts began the descent but turned sideways in the current, broached against a protruding rock and began to swamp upstream of it. The scouts struggled to right it for a few seconds until I yelled for them to get away from it. They bailed out and the canoe slowly folded around the rock like so much soggy cardboard.

We recovered crew and all gear, then spent a couple fruitless hours attempting to pry the now inside-out canoe off the rock but found four feet of rushing water a bit more powerful than our feeble efforts. We continued on that afternoon with four scouts per canoe, some of their excess gear stuffed into mine, camping later that afternoon on Darky to lick our wounds and dry our gear.

After a fortifying breakfast we continued on the next morning. Then, while crossing Argo in a light rain, a sudden

squall overtook us from behind and two of the heavily laden canoes were swamped as waves came over their stern. Once again we recovered and regrouped with only the loss of a few hats. However, when we arrived at the Crooked Lake portage we saw just how strong a blow had been aimed at us. Trees were down all along the portage trail. With our one axe and one saw, we cut our way through the deadfalls and threaded the canoes through the rubble as best we could. Some of the scouts attempted to find humor in our predicament by reminding the others that we now had only four canoes to wrestle through the morass rather than the original five!

After a couple uncharacteristically uneventful days we were finally within an easy morning's paddle of the canoe base and busied ourselves to accomplish our Jack Putnam-prescribed airing of packs and tents and scrubbing of cook kit. I had a breakfast of bacon (canned, back then) and eggs (powdered) set aside for our final morning. Our only remaining provision was a chocolate cake mix. That night it began to rain and Rain and RAIN ! By morning we were close to floating. Starting a fire was out of the question though we did attempt one to stave off eminent mutiny. I finally mixed up the chocolate cake mix and powdered eggs into a watery conglomeration billed as "scrambled chocolates". This was drunk cold in the drizzling rain and we were on our way with the prospect of a limitless sauna later that



afternoon as our source of inspiration.

Late that afternoon, I recall rather sheepishly entering Cliff Hansen's office cabin to inform him that I had "lost a canoe". I can still see him levitate off his chair saying "You did what ?!"

The following week, Ron Walls and Gar Mulrooney obtained permission from Canadian Ranger Rod Salshert (sp ?) to travel by canoe and 2 hp "kicker" out through the Basswood River to retrieve the Grumman's carcass. Water levels were some feet lower by that time and they had no trouble peeling it off its chosen rock. Lashing its "U" shaped remains across the gunnels, they chugged back home, speaking unkindly of me on each of the portages, I was later informed. The remainder of its days were spent as a barge, hauling sand for waterfront restoration projects; twin four foot scars along each flank where it had been braised back into service. Newly arriving crews were shown it as a cautionary tale.

A couple members of that Illinois crew wrote me years afterward remarking on how that trip taught them to reach deeper inside themselves in times of adversity. It was a learning experience for us all. I find it interesting that I can recall this trip so vividly after nearly 45 years while other trips which went according to plan, in sunny weather with good fishing, are but a snapshot in my memory. ■

Bob Vouk
1961-62
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The Adventures of Walls and Trampe

by Dave Trampe

This summer I was saddened when I read in the REFLECTIONS of Ron Walls' passing. He served the canoe base between 1956 and 1969. I was a guide during the summer of '56 and 57.

I'm sure many older Alumni will relate to the adventures of Walls and Trampe. When I read Bob Vouks tribute to Ron in the fall issue, I was surprised by "named" vehicles traversing the Fernberg road in 1961 ie: "Green Machine," "Red Rod" and the "Blue Gnu".

In the spring of '57, I think, we were concerned when two Charlie staff were late arriving. I can't recall for certain who they were. Nick Hill, Ray White or ??? They did arrive, late, unbroken, but very shaken in a blue Air Force van that had rolled enroute. It was heavily loaded with pancake mix, maple syrup and other food stuffs. I recall the first two because that was what first painted the nearly windowless, wrinkled wreck.

We chided the two survivors that they must have been drinking more than red eye to have rolled this formerly fine newly acquired surplus vehicle. Some alumni must recall the driving force behind the naming and painting of Blue Gnu (I) was Ron Walls who painted the red polka dots and christened it with the name? Pronounced: blue ganew – More about this vehicle later.

Ronnie and I would depart the base if we had 48 hours and someone dropped an idea.

We sought adventure wherever it could be found. Armed with blind faith and ignorance, we never doubted we could get back to the base in time to meet our obligations. A Thunder Bay rowing regatta, where we slept in a racing shell loft was one lark.

We hitch-hiked to Minneapolis-St Paul, Ronnie and I went up the Forestry Tower because Ronnie told me he had never been up a sky scraper in Oklahoma. I think it was 27 stories to the observation deck. That was high in 56 or 7 . . . really.

I called on an old girlfriend, who brought her girlfriend to be our dates that Saturday night. At sunrise, they drove us to the outskirts of St Paul so two "bearded scruff" would have a chance of hitching a ride to Ely.

We had to be at the base by 3:00 to meet a new group of grubbies. A trusting man picked us up because he was tired also and going to Ely! We took turns driving and sleeping our way to Zups Grocery in Ely. Arriving just in time to catch the base vehicle (Red Rod?) going to the base and dressing to meet my new crew, just in time, to my recollection. These miraculous returns were commonplace. We were brave, honest, kind and trustworthy. We assumed everyone else in the world was also a believer in the Scout motto.

In the fall of 1957, Ronnie and I were among the last five or six people closing the base and heading back to school. We were made a gift of the

battered Blu Gnu. The jist of it was: you have to go, "it" has to go and don't bring it back! I suppose "it" did not contribute to the image of a high adventure Scout base in the minds of some – WRONG! There was a lot of high adventure left in that machine.

It was raining heavily that cold September morning. We emptied the outboard gas barrel. Only the driver had a seat, so a milk carton case and a bunk mattress improvised as a jump seat (we "borrowed" these items as any good and honest Scouts would).

Cardboard boxes from helpful grocery stores and our own hunting knives closed the gaping window frames from the torrents of cold water from passing trucks and relentless skies. We were a hilarious sight as passing fellow motorists testified to in numerous ways. Ron and I determined that we should have been called the "Wayward Bus" rather than the Blu Gnu. The Wayward bus was a black and white movie where a bus was trapped in a torrential rain and flood. It starred the shapely Jayne Mansfield. Some of you older alum may recall Jayne and our youthful fantasies.

Ronnie said I could have his share of the Blu Gnu if I could deliver him to a bus, train or plane in the Twin Cities. We went to my parents home in Long Prairie, MN. My parents reliable Ford got Ronnie to civilized transportation.

(Continued on page 8)

The Guiding Life

Living simply brings rich rewards for husband-wife team and the clients they take to Quetico

by Sam Cook

ELY - The ceiling of Harry and Mary Lambirth's summer cabin is plastered with bass. Smallmouth bass. Four-pound bass. Five-pound bass. Six-pound bass. Even a few 7-pound bass. The fish themselves, of course, are still swimming somewhere in Ontario's Quetico Provincial Park. But the record of those hefty bass is here, recorded in Mary's careful printing, listed by weight, length and girth, along with the names of those who caught them. Each sheet of poster board documents a year in Harry and Mary's smallmouth bass guiding career. Twenty-eight sheets of poster board, spilling off the rafters and down the walls.

Fishing has been good.

"We've caught more than a thousand 5-pound bass since 1978," says Harry, sipping a can of pop on this Saturday in June. "And we've caught a dozen over 7 pounds."

Mary does a quick check of her records.

"Thirteen," she says.

Harry, 54, and Mary, 55, have carved out a rare niche among North Woods guides. They're a true husband-and-wife guiding team, sharing both fishing and camping duties on 15 trips a summer into the Quetico's 1.2-million-acre canoe country.

Both Harry and Mary haul gear over portages in this non-motorized park. Both make camp and cook. Both paddle while their clients fish. They guide smallmouth bass anglers exclusively, mostly from the South -- North Carolina, Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee.

Once you've fished smallmouth bass in Quetico with Harry and Mary, you're likely to come back. This summer, the average number of years their parties have fished with them is 12. One party will be back for its 25th year.

"We've had three new parties in the last 15 years," Harry says. "We have a waiting list of old parties. If you don't come every year, it's hard to get in."

Go ahead. Look for their web site. They don't have one. Nor do they have a computer. They also don't have an answering machine. If you want to reach them in the summer, better call on Saturday, the only day of the week they're at their tiny cabin on Moose Lake near Ely. The rest of the time, they're on the trail, camping and fishing.

Because so many groups have fished with Harry and Mary for so long, it's as if the couple is fishing with old friends now. In a sense, Harry and Mary have become family to those they guide.

"They call us when their dog dies," Mary says.

When you talk to those who have fished with the couple, they don't talk about bass. They talk about Harry and Mary. They talk about the wilderness.

Bob Dunaway of St. Louis has been on 15 trips.

"It started out as smallmouth bass fishing," says Dunaway, 59. "But over the years, the bass fishing has become less and less important. Harry and Mary are both very well-read and well-edu-

cated. Harry can speak to almost any subject with credibility.

"Being out in the wilderness with people you love and enjoy is wonderful. I would still go even if I couldn't take a fishing rod."

Kay Dunn and her husband Donald, from Norfolk, Ark., made their fourth trip with Harry and Mary this summer.

"I would go even if I couldn't fish," says Kay Dunn, 57. "I love Harry and Mary. What you see is what you get. They're not pretentious. It's so interesting to spend 24 hours a day for six days with intelligent people who are not self-absorbed and have a wonderful sense of humor."

Jerry McKinnis, host of ESPN television's "The Fishin' Hole," tries to tell first-time visitors what their trip will be like.

"When we come away from there, you'll be a different person," McKinnis tells them. "You will have met the most unusual people in the world and been in the most unusual place in the world."

COMING NORTH

Harry and Mary -- nobody calls them "the Lambirths" -- went to the same high school in Sedalia, Mo., but never thought about dating. They came north to Ely and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness on separate trips, Harry with the Boy Scouts in 1966 and Mary with a church group in 1968. They loved the country and, separately, landed jobs with Bob Cary's Canadian Border Outfitters.

They worked there from 1968 to 1973.

"They were certainly the key to my operation," says Cary, who watched them go on to develop their own business.

"They're awful good at what they do," he says. "They're top-notch cooks and campers, superb fishermen. They have great rapport with their people. They're just nice people, and everything runs on people."

Harry and Mary eventually fell in love and were married in 1971. They began offering their wilderness smallmouth trips together in 1977.

Fortuitously, one of their guests that summer was McKinnis, whom Harry had guided while working for Canadian Border Outfitters. When McKinnis' story aired on "The Fishin' Hole," Harry and Mary's telephone started ringing. The following summer, they were booked solid and have been ever since.

"We are successful because of Jerry," Harry says. "We would have been successful eventually, but he made us successful immediately."

McKinnis, of Little Rock, Ark., now owns a production company, producing many outdoor shows for ESPN television. He estimates he has made 20 to 25 trips with Harry and Mary.

"We've got a special lake we've been going to up there," McKinnis said in a telephone interview from Little Rock. "Harry and Mary don't go there with anybody else, and I've never been there without Harry and Mary. That lake ☛

and Harry and Mary are probably the most special thing in my life."

WINTERS OFF

Most fishing guides must supplement their income with other jobs during the winter. Harry and Mary earn enough guiding for 15 weeks each summer. They make "about as much as a schoolteacher makes," Harry says. That's one teacher, not two.

"But the secret is we live really cheap," Harry says. "We don't go out to eat. We see about one movie a year."

They have chosen not to have children. They have a home on 316 acres near Blackduck where they live when they're not guiding. They moved there because the area offered good duck hunting, a one-time passion for the couple. Their simple, two-story home has no running water. They have an outhouse and a sauna. They cannot watch McKinnis' fishing shows on television. They have no television. They are not in debt.

They read voraciously all winter. Mary says that when a

Scout group visited their home, one boy asked, "Is this a library?" They listen to Minnesota Public Radio. They subscribe to the Minneapolis Star Tribune, National Geographic and Opera World.

"This always surprises somebody when you take a new person (on a trip with Harry and Mary)," McKinnis said. "I tell them these are people that don't have plumbing in their home, and I tell them these are the two most intelligent people you'll ever run into. Lord o' mercy, they are so smart."

Harry and Mary gave up duck hunting in 1990, when the duck population was in decline, and bought their first sled dogs. They have been mushing since, and they both race mid-distance races of 200 to 300 miles.

If you ask what they spend money on, they answer simultaneously: "Dogs."

If you ask what's lacking in their lives, you'll get another tandem answer.

"Another month of winter," Harry says.

Mary is more specific.

"Between January and

February," she says.

Sled dogs allow the couple to be in the woods in the winter. It isn't all about racing.

"We would run dogs whether we ever raced or not," Harry said.

During the summers, fellow musher Jamie Nelson of Togo cares for Harry and Mary's dogs.

GOING TO TOWN

It's a Saturday in June, and Harry and Mary sit in their rented cabin near Canadian Border Outfitters. The most stressful part of the week is over. That's Saturday morning, when they have to go into bustling Ely for supplies. They get up at 5:30 and head for town. They wash sleeping bags at the laundromat, buy the fresh food they need for the next week's trip, then get out of Ely as quickly as possible.

By early afternoon, Mary has the food packed and Harry has the canoes and gear ready. Their incoming party usually arrives Saturday afternoon. Harry and Mary have cold beer and pop waiting for them, in coolers filled with

ice. The cabin has no electricity or running water, no refrigerator. They'll leave for the woods Sunday morning from Moose Lake, heading for the Canadian border at Prairie Portage, and spend six days with another group of old friends.

The schedule -- and the work -- never grows tiresome.

"We're just as excited about being with the last group as we are the first group," Harry says.

The couple is not sure how long they'll keep guiding but have no plans to retire.

"I want to die in the traces," Harry says, and Mary nods.

As some of their clients have aged, Harry and Mary have scaled back mileage on some of their trips. But they're both in good health. Fishing, they say, is even better than it used to be. And the Quetico remains unchanged, Harry says.

"It's still the best place on the planet to spend a week that I know of," he says. ■

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Night Paddling

by Mark Nordstrom

There's supposed to be a campsite up ahead across from the portage trail, and somehow our Charlie Guide will find it in the dark and we'll set up our tents. But for now, we are silent and humble visitors, suspended in canoes between water and stars in this awesome, timeless wilderness.

This is one of the many reasons Troop 4 is trekking to Northern Tier next summer.

Journal entry by Calvin Gabriel, ASM, Troop 476, Cupertino, CA during August 2003 trek to Northern.

This was written after night paddling on Louisa Lake. Calvin goes on to talk about how every member of the crew was awed by the spectacle of nighttime. It's something we often overlook.

Astronomers complain that our cities pollute the sky with light at night. Here on the ground folks complain when their neighborhood doesn't have a streetlight. They feel the need for light, but some of us can remember when nights

were dark. Very few of the Scouts who canoe at Northern Tier have any idea of how dark it gets at night. Very few of the leaders do. It's an experience that they can get at Northern Tier, but the nights are short in the summer. You have to plan it in advance.

Paddling at night is a very bad idea unless you've covered the same route at least once before in the daylight. You need an idea of how long it will take to cover the

distance and you need to be quite certain that you'll have an open campsite at the end. A bad experience I had shows why.

I planned a night paddle into every trip I could, once I had enough familiarity with the routes I took to do it. One was on Sturgeon. If you paddle to the most western point of Russell and portage into Sturgeon you can paddle south through a narrows that has a large white rock

standing out of the water at the narrows. Even with no moon, starlight would be enough to see the rock. Just beyond the narrows was a nice campsite. It would be easy. We ate supper near the falls into the Sturgeon Narrows, then paddled to the portage, took it and loaded up. Night came up over us as we paddled. So did clouds, though. The sky suddenly clouded over completely.

I had taken a very careful compass reading as I sat in my canoe before we started paddling and I turned on my flashlight occasionally as I paddled toward my rock. I knew about how long it would take and I checked my watch and compass often by turning on my flashlight. I wanted the flashlight on as little as possible, because I figured this total darkness experience was as good as the awesome night under the stars on a big lake experience would have been. The crew was completely silent. We didn't speak. They kept track of where we were

going by my light coming on once in a while.

It was only about a 20-to-40-minute paddle. When I think back on it now, I think that I should have been scared to death, but I was having a great time. It was a new experience for me, too. I just kept a happy attitude. Of course, I also knew that we could camp just about anywhere and get things straight in the morning, but I didn't want it to come to that.

Then my big rock (jutting about a dozen feet out of the water in the middle of the narrows) appeared. I found it when I turned on my flashlight to check my watch and compass. The rock was on my left shoulder. The canoe had missed scraping it by inches. If I had turned my flashlight on seconds earlier or later, I would have missed it. I was unbelievably lucky and I knew it. I also knew, finally, exactly where I was.

I remembered something I read somewhere in one of those places like Readers Digest that you never fully

believe that quote by Daniel Boone, "I've never been lost. There have been plenty of times I had no idea where I was, but I've never been lost." That was how I felt at that moment.

The rest was easy. I knew it would only be a few minutes. I shined my light left and right as we exited the narrows. We found the campsite. Everybody in the crew got out flashlights and we had no trouble setting up camp. The mood was slightly festive as we did our work under the light of wavering flashlights held by people who were trying to work and hold the lights at the same time.

The crew got me up the next morning. Usually it was the other way around. They were still excited. They had gone to sleep, gotten plenty of rest and gotten up full of what, hubris?

So, the point is that the night was a disaster. They didn't get the mystical experience of being on a big lake

under an enormous sky. They just can't get that anywhere but in the BWCA or Quetico and it's unlikely they'll get it unless some Northern Tier interpreter lays it out for them to do. This crew, though, still got an exciting experience without the big sky, but only because I had a pretty darn specific idea of where I was going. There have been many, many times since that day that I have relived the moment that I turned on my flashlight, saw the rock at my right shoulder and praised every supernatural power for that.

I'm not telling you about all the wonderful night paddling experiences I had. There were lots of them and they made lifetime memories. I'm telling you about the worst. The point I want to make is that it ended as a positive experience, because I had been across this space before. And I'm telling you that whenever you're lost – you're home, you just don't know where you are. ■



From the Portage Telegraph:

Travis W. DeWitt

wishes everyone to know that his new address is: 216 Fifth St., Harrisville, MI 48740 and that he plans to be at that address for the next couple of years at least.

Melissa Bertelsen

(1999-2001) works for the EPA in the Kansas City Area

Mike Wheeler

(Crew Member during the 1960s and Guide in 1971) will be returning to the north country in August 2006 as an

advisor to a crew with his son who is a Life Scout. He looks forward to returning to a place that he has many fond memories of and in the environment that had such a profound effect upon my life.

Captain Lawrence (Lawry) Ash

(1975 – 1979) sent the base a note back in September from Camp Eggers in Kabul, Afghanistan along with a flag that flew over the SCIF in Camp Eggers, Kabul,

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 5)

The Adventures of Walls and Trampe

Some time later, I cut the rumpled roof off the Blu Gnu, changing it to something resembling a pick up, sanes back wall and windows. I was hauling a heavy load of feed sacks full of cow feed (versus pancake batter and syrup). Highway 71 was being rebuilt and there was a big windrow of sand and asphalt down the center of the road bed . . .

I apologize to the accused Red Eye drunks who first rolled that loose steering, sloppy tie rodged piece of government surplus junk. I know for certain how you

came to mix the pancakes with the syrup before they came off the griddle!

I would like to think the Blu Gnu was recycled into some quality vehicle that today isn't trying to destroy good Charlie staff up Ely way. Is there any chance another Blu Gnu might be lurking there? ■

Dave Trampe now lives in Longville, Minnesota

Send out a search party!

The following alumni from the 1990s and 1950s have stepped off the portage trail and have gotten lost. Let's start up a search party and find them. Do you know where we can find them? I found a few without trying too hard – I bet if we all look together we'll find more than a few out there who have gotten lost.

Accola Josh 1998-99
 Adams Micah 1995
 Allen Jennifer 1990
 Anderson Bruce 1991
 Applegath Matthew 1995
 Armin Dave 1956,63
 Asleson Dan 1999
 Baker Gregory 1956
 Balot William 1992-93
 Bauen Lyle 1956
 Bergstrom John 1958,59
 Bernard Gerald 1955
 Bills Duane 1955-56
 Bivin Jason 1995
 Brown Derwin 1956
 Buchel Markus 1995
 Burrowes Mark R. 1997
 Butrum Jeffrey 1991
 Cegielski Catherine 1998
 Christiansen Josh 1997
 Clute Dave 1999-00
 Cook Craig 1991
 Cooper Jeff 1990
 DeRhodes Douglas 1993,96
 Deutsche Craig 1956
 Diamont Joel 1996
 Dinda Patricia 1990
 Donahue John 1990
 D'Onofrio Matthew 1993-94,96
 Dorazio Angelique 1996-97
 Dowdell Melina 1999-00
 Dyson Rodney 1992
 Ellis Martin 1990
 Elrod Scott 1990
 Eng Patrick 1991
 Esposito Pete 1999
 Ettner John 1952
 Fago Cliff 1955
 Farmer Danny 1990-92
 Flinsch F. Michael 1956
 Gafner Bruce 1992
 Gauffin Claus 1991
 Georgitis Nathan 1996
 Gibson Kevin 1993
 Gideon Reggie 1998

Gillingham Heidi 1996
 Gilsdorf John 1955
 Graham Justin 1993-94
 Greenlee Nathan 1997
 Hanson Jerry L. 1958
 Harkness Chris 1999
 Hart Alexander 1991
 Hawkins Gregory 1992
 Heise Warren 1956
 Helledy John 1956
 Hendricks Ed 1956
 Herbsleb Jonathan 1990
 Herther Terry 1955-56
 Heverly Michael 1955
 Higdon Samuel 1956
 Hill Brett 1991
 Hill Nicholas 1956
 Hoffbeck Chad 1956
 Hoyt David 1990
 Hughes Jason 1991
 Isaacson Ben 1997
 Jeffers III John 1994
 Johnson Lee 1996-7
 Johnson Paul 1955-56
 Jones P. Wayne 1956
 Jones Todd 1990
 Keene Joe 1998-99
 Keller John 1990-91
 Kizer Robert 1953
 Kleager James 1991-92,96
 Knudsen Jerry 1953
 Knutson Arlen 1956
 Knutson Charlie 1999
 Koenig Eddie 1955
 Korteum Kevin 1994
 Kritzer Thomas 1993
 Krueger Leonard 1956
 Kunzman Dan 1993
 Langley Anthony 1991
 Lavoie Casey 1999
 Lawver George 1990
 Lawver Jeannine 1990
 Lommen Gordy 1959-65,68
 Makela Mark 1999
 Maloney James 1955-56
 Martin Craig 1994

Martin Geoffrey 1994
 McGauley Erin 1997
 McNeil Robert 1955
 McPheeters Robyn 1995
 McRoberts David 1990
 Miller Kim 1996, 98-99
 Miller Lewis 1956
 Money Jason 1998
 Moore Thomas 1993-94
 Morales Timon 1996
 Nave Michael 1999
 Neal Brian 1990
 Nelson Steve 1956
 Nuchols John 1956
 Oatman Mike 1998
 Olson Erik 1998
 Olson Joe 1998
 O'Rinn Susan 1999
 Pancake Keith 1991
 Parrott David 1992-93
 Perez Andrew 1996
 Pfeiffer Paul 1998
 Popham Pete 1999-03
 Port Robert 1953
 Putnam William 1995
 Putnam John 1956-61
 Radosh Mike 1999-00
 Rahm Bruce 1956
 Rainey Justin 1993
 Rasmussen Richard 1952
 Reed Ami 1999
 Renner Jim 1956
 Richards Edward 1991
 Richards Greg 1994
 Robson Adam 1994
 Roth Jerry 1958-61
 Ruiz John 1991,94
 Rulifson Dennis 1956
 Runge Chris 1998
 Salzer Jeffrey 1992
 Sayed Omar 1993
 Sayler Chester 1956
 Schwieren Richard 1952
 Scott Lee 1993,94
 Scott Lyndon 1993
 Sever Ben 1991

Shlemkevich Andrea 1996
 Shores Garry 1999
 Sitzer Ed 1955
 Skeaff Erik 1996
 Skelton Keith 1996-97
 Skelton IV John 1991
 Skinner James 1953
 Slagoski Jimmy 1992
 Smith Con 1953
 Smith Lorinda 1991
 Smith Steven 1990
 Springer Julie 1991
 Staley Robert 1955-56
 Stemen Jamie 1998
 Stephens Don 1998
 Stevens Andrew 1997
 Strickland Flossie To 1999
 Swanson Hale 1956
 Swanson John 1954-58,62
 Taggart Fr. Rob 1999
 Thoe James 1955
 Thom Nathan 1995-97
 Tierney Richard 1956
 Troehler Greg 1992
 Turner Aubrey 1993
 Valentin Michael 1993
 Van Riper Tom 1997-98
 Vars Roy 1992
 Vasquez Manuel 1992
 Vowles Jeremy 1991
 Wandstrom Demar 1953
 Ward Chris 1997
 Weir Aileen 1998
 Weisselberg Ed 1953
 Weisinger Carrie 1999
 Welsh Philip 1990
 Wendlandt Hansen 1999
 Wertz Jeremy 1994
 Wilcox Brett 1997-98
 Wink Gary 1993-94
 Yocum Caleb 1992-93
 Yocum Jacob 1997-98
 Yoder Steven 1990



For Immediate Release



Bob and Edie

Ely, Minnesota - Jackpine Bob Cary, well-known author, artist and newspaperman and his wife Edith Sommers Cary are being honored by the city of Ely as the 2006 Grand Marshals of the Voyageur Winter

Festival www.voyageur-winterfestival.com

The couple will be honored during the Festival's Opening Ceremony at Washington Auditorium on Feb. 3, at 7pm. The event is

open to the public. Sam Cook, outdoor writer for the Duluth News Tribune will MC that evening and featured performers will be the Warm Women of the North from Duluth.

For more information: Muffin Nelson, 218-340-1822 nelsonely@citlink.net



Warm Women of the North from Duluth

(Continued from page 8)

From the Portage Telegraph:

Afghanistan on the 11th of September, 2005 during operation Enduring Freedom. Lawry is continuing to serve and we're doing our best to ensure that he gets his copies of Reflections. Joe Mattson writes that the flag will be flown on the base in coming years. ■

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