

The Time Capsule: A Camp Waupaca Reunion Retrospective

The 60th Anniversary of Camp Waupaca

...A year ago, (August 2010), the Loyalists show up in Waupaca for an informal reunion and the official Board Meeting. Someone has been in Waupaca since 1996 without fail! **Mike Lurie** and **Paul Warshauer** discuss the idea of a reunion “next year...” There is much discussion at the 2010 annual meeting at the Grand Seasons in Waupaca. **Warren Metzdorff** says, “It will never work.” **George Lamm** is not so sure but is willing to listen...the board decides to look into the matter...the Loyalists are invited to walk through camp with CYJ Director Noah Gallagher, who is excited and supportive of our plans...thus the seeds are planted for the 60th anniversary reunion edition of Camp Waupaca...contracts... insurance...board discussions...and a very generous donation by **Dave Weiner**...”Is the reunion still on?” as **Mike’s** phone rings off the wall...**George Lamm’s** wife calls all the members to generate interest...

...**Thursday, August 11, 2011:** Warshauer wakes up at **Gregg Feinstein’s** condo in downtown Chicago and goes for an “Everything Bagel” at Einstein Bagels and declares, “The 2011 Reunion is officially open!” He picks up **Rick Passman** at 10:00 am on LSD (Lake Shore Drive) and they begin the drive using the old neighborhood streets: Peterson, Ridge, then up to Skokie and onto the Edens...traffic in Milwaukee but we find **Rick Poole** in Madison, WI ready to go with his 35 year old “Big Blue Cooler”... after we fill it with necessary “supplies” we choose to drive up Wisconsin Highway 22 stopping at several watering holes... along the way: Leeds then Wild Rose...The Advance Party ends up at the Clearwater Harbor Bar for the Opening Ceremonies and have the first Waupaca toast at 5:00 pm...**Michael Gordon** calls to say he is on the way and arrives at the Harbor Bar shortly thereafter. **Michael** is the camper who, in 1966, introduces Camp Waupaca to **Paul Warshauer**... We feel that with two Ricks, Paul, and Mike all present, the reunion is officially well under way...We check into the Grand Seasons Best Western and make a special deal... “The other hotel down the street is giving us a \$59 per night deal, can you?” The Manager knows Camp Waupaca people have been there for years so he gives us all the great deal... **Warren and Anna Metzdorff** show up, then **Mike Lurie** and off we go to Simpsons for our traditional opening dinner (2 Mikes, 2 Ricks, Warren, Anna, and Paul)...It appears we have all sorts of ceremonial openings and closings... After dinner the group travels to several watering holes then sleep...we dream of Lake Stratton, the Far Fields, the Cabins, and memories...

...**Friday, August 12, 2011:** Early this morning **Ken Lapins** wakes Abby and Rachel (his two daughters) to get ready for Camp. They are excited! He has told them stories since they were born so they are excited but not as much as their Daddy... Camper of the Year **Glen Spear** has a tougher sell; One of his kids is gung ho. The other is lukewarm... meanwhile the advance party in Waupaca has breakfast at the Waupaca Woods Restaurant for our traditional opening day breakfast...we have fun with our waitress as we discuss where was the first “Stop and Go” light. Paul calls the City of Waupaca and leaves a message for the City Engineer...(we don’t hear back until the following Tuesday!)...The entire group goes on the Lady of the Lake boat tour around the Chain of Lakes...It rains and we use umbrellas...then the group shopping at the elegant Mills Fleet Farm...lunch at the Wheelhouse Pizza Parlor where we meet **Sonya Wanty**...It is close to opening so we take the back roads to Camp Waupaca...when we arrive **Kenny**, Abby and Rachel **Lapins** have already arrived and Kenny sets up his family in Cabin 9...Noah Gallagher, the Camp Young Judaea director, welcomes us warmly...An anonymous former camper (SS) arrives and decides to do a laker, unsupervised...still, it is his best memory of camp... We find our bunks and begin the set up...we

have no flag for flag lowering but our pulley is still on what's left of our old the flagpole from 5 years ago (it used to be taller, didn't it?) so we are creative and "capture a flag..." We go into the Mess Hall and stand waiting for grace, "Evening has come / The Board is spread / Thanks be to Him / Who gives us bread / Praise God for bread." The response: "For these and all Thy blessings, Oh Lord, we thank thee." It's chicken... "Is that **Rosemary Clotiaux**, camp nurse from 1969-1978? She hasn't changed a bit since 1971!"...We trek out to the Near Diamond and select teams. Former camp nurses, **Rosemary Clotiaux** and **Suzie Stoffel-Lewis** join in and serve as cheerleaders (and nurse our aching bodies!) Our softball game is played and many tired muscles. Lots of fun as we bat through the order.... **Lee Eisner's** wife Kerry is a ringer. It turns out they met while playing softball...Tonight's Players of the Game are Jonah Eisner, age 5 and Carson Eisner, age 3 ... we gather firewood and have a great first night campfire...stories are told, memories pour back, smores are made & eaten...

...Saturday, August 13, 2011: Although Daddies and Mommies want to sleep in, many are up early to walk around and see the Camp at dawn...**Mike** and **Paul** walk through camp like **Manny Desnet** or **Mike Euer** waking up the camp with "It's another beautiful day at Camp Waupaca...flag raising in 30 minutes..." we assemble and line up in at the Flagpole and re-enact the ceremony. Each Cabin reports, including the nurses and those in "Hotel Cabins"...This morning, Cabin 9 campers (The **Lapins** Girls) raise the flag... into the Mess Hall... we see whole fresh avocados, something that no one ever remembers being served at camp before...a little singing then announcements, "Waterskiing is open by signups, the waterfront will be open at 10:00 am for swimming and boating"...choose up softball at the near diamond at 10:00 as well... At 10:00 **Warren Metzdorff** and **Mike Lurie** square off in a pitching duel... **Mike Savin** shows up and he walks around in "reminiscent mode"... last time we saw him he had massive glasses and a mop of hair...not so much hair now and no specks... All three **Becker Brothers**, **Lee**, **Perry**, and **Glenn** and appear and grab mitts to play in the first softball...**George Lamm** reports for duty and plays first base... Sam Johnson (**Todd Laff's** stepson) hits a triple, everyone bats and fields...Cama Schulte, Sam's mom, leads the cheers...many sore muscles but smiles all around as game is declared a tie...Player of the morning game goes to: Jonah Levine, age 8, son of **Jeff Levine**... Many go swimming and build sandcastles... **Dick Garb**, camp sage and memory expert, shows up on the beach and soaks it all in... he tells stories and corrects erroneous information... **Paul** brings a small brown bottle to the beach that contains the sacred ear drops; **Rosemary Clotiaux** confirms the recipe: 1/2 White Vinegar / 1/2 alcohol. Many boys remembered the smell of putting the drops in ears to prevent swimmer's ear....at the top of the waterfront, **Barry Craven** recalls that his time at Camp Waupaca For boys was the best of his life...we remember little **Steven "Turtle" Chavin** (**Michael Chavin's** younger brother) who passed away far too young...meanwhile there is a Blue & White War Pow-Wow on the raft and a last minute switch of Little Chiefs...Lunch and then we have the best pianist in Waupaca, **Joel Kettler**, play camp songs at the mighty 88 (well, it is an electronic keyboard)... We sing the Camp Song and "Titanic"...**Rick Passman** sings one part of one verse, "Oh it was sad..." and tells us "that's all you get out of me..." Some sort of commotion occurs at the front of the Mess Hall as **Todd Laff** squares off against **Kenny Lapins** and knocks off his hat. **Glen Spear** comes to the rescue of **Kenny Lapins** and **Rob Ezsak** comes to the aid of **Todd Laff**. They serve as Little Chiefs to their Big Chiefs and the "War is all Heated Up!" All campers, counselors, and children go directly to the Horseshoe and we divided into teams...**Scott Rubin** arrives but is too late to be the Little Chief...**Ken** and **Todd** go over the list of events and assign participants...most go off to practice tennis, walking backwards, tossing pine cones into a hula hoop on the archery field, soccer, nailing into wood, and the dreaded (but hysterical) canoe obstacle course... We all meet at the horseshoe one more time and the relay begins, as it has for decades,

with the sinking of three free throws on the basketball court...The relay beings at 3:30 with basketball free throws... There is fun and urgency as everyone works hard...**Steve Shyman** and his girlfriend, Vivina Ma, perform the Canoe Obstacle course jumping out of their boat and getting back in on a whistle... **Two Becker brothers (Lee and Glenn)** accomplish the tennis rally on the first try with ten consecutive hits...Ami Ma does a great job in the backwards walk... It is neck and neck and, as usual, Michael Leung practices for an hour and gets a ringer on his second toss!...it comes down to the fire and BOIL WATER BOIL. The final score is 36:10 for the BLUE Team (**Kenny Lapins/Glen Spear**) and 37:20 for The WHITE Team (**Todd Laff/Rob Ezsak**)... Many of us head for the beach for an old fashioned G-swim, **George Lamm** and **Rick Passman** canoe into "Big Lake Stratton..." **Warren** shows off his muscles and takes his wonderful wife, **Anna Metzdorff** on a rowboat ride around the circumference of sand bottomed, crystal clear, spring fed, glacier formed, dredged by the Caldwells, Lake Stratton!... Dinner of some strange goulash deal (they call it cholent, at least it is kosher)... We sing a few more songs, announcements then the evening softball game is played... Lots of pinch runners...1973 one-time counselor **Errol Grisard** really connects with the ball, however his running doesn't keep up as he turns a triple into a double... Player Of the Game: Jacob Spear, son of **Glen Spear**, for amazing fielding and batting...then a campfire...the official CWRG Board of Directors holds its annual meeting in full view...Big Chief **Warshauer** wears his ceremonial Indian headdress...**Paul** then proceeds to award the Blue & White War "player of the war" to Max..."Who's Max?" ...**Warshauer** says "you know, the kid who got a ringer in two throws"...he can't read his own writing ... we present the Dave Weiner award and explain who **Dave Weiner** is...this one-time award goes to **David Wax** who passed away suddenly this year...stories by **Warren Metzdorff, Scott Rubin, Joel Kettler** "Wisconsin State Law..." and pizza arrives, courtesy of **Joel and Judy Kettler** with soda and beer..."Glen Becker, have you ever drank beer at the horseshoe before?" ... **Mike Lurie** tells the story of **Mike Berke** being saved in Lake Stratton by **Rick Passman**... we sing, "Day is done, gone the sun / From the Lakes from the Hills from the sky / All is well / Safely Rest / God is Nigh." ...**Perry Becker** asks if this song isn't Nihilist, "God is Nigh?" ... Some go back to their hotels...others drift off to sleep...**Todd Laff, Mike Lurie**, and the **Gerowitz** family (minus a very sleepy child) are still in the camping spirit and journey out to the far fields to do some sky and star watching with Naturalist **Rick Poole** and others on the far field...children dream of camp and many of us know it will be over tomorrow...still we have dreams of canoeing, swimming...**George Lamm** dreams of teaching horseback riding from many years ago but he leaves early...the beds are a little rough for some of us with bad backs...still, a night to remember

...Sunday August 14, 2011

Flagpole, salutes, as Nathan and Miranda Gerowitz, son and daughter of **Rob Gerowitz** re-enact the last flag raising 5 years ago... the mystery of Max is solved, (Max is really Michael Leung, **Steve Shyman's** guest) who tossed a ringer on his second toss at yesterday's Super Duper relay... We set up memorabilia in the Rec Hall: plaques, Yearbooks, shirts, old documents, contracts, letterhead, schedules and lots of photos...**Glenn "Glenardo" Becker** cannot believe he was in a play with **Jonathan Mintz** and **Ralph Saunders**...we produce the play and a program... **Michael Gordon** sees a photo of himself from 1969...We all miss **Bob Mowen** and hoped he could have attended...slowly the camp empties as people go back to their hometowns across the nation. **Rosemary Clotiaux** returns to New Orleans, **Suzie Stoffel** to Chapel Hill, NC... The **Kettlers** to Los Angeles, and others to points in Illinois, Wisconsin, Nebraska and Minnesota. Everyone packed up their belongings and cleaned up. The camp is empty and fall will soon be here. **Mike** and **Paul** stay behind and settle up. Noah Gallagher compliments our group for leaving the camp clean...the

reunion is officially over or until the “Trail Ends...” **Michael Gordon** drives **Rick Poole** back to Madison and on to his home...

Only three die-hards remain in Waupaca after the reunion. The exhausted men check into the Grand Seasons Hotel and visit former printer’s wife Cory Kramer...have a last supper at The Chain of Lakes Restaurant... **Mike** almost gets lucky with a neighbor of Camp...A few drinks at JRs and it’s off to bed. **Lurie** and **Warshauer** agree, **“SOMEONE ELSE WILL HAVE TO DO THIS AGAIN IN FIVE YEARS AND IT WON’T BE US!”**

...Monday, August 15, 2011

Three Little Indians (**Warshauer, Passman, & Lurie**) have the ceremonial closing breakfast at the King’s Table in King...**Mike Lurie** says his goodbyes as he heads to Chicago to visit family...and then there were Two Little Indians...**Paul** and **Rick** travel to Stevens Point and take the Point Brewery Tour and spend the afternoon sampling local beers at The Elbow Room and talked to locals, Ernie’s and were served by a bartender in a sling...Harbor Bar, the Place and Chain of Lakes Dinner at a TJ Martins, the Waupaca Irish Pub...

...Tuesday, August 16, 2011

Up and out of the hotel thus formally ending the reunion...**Rick** and **Paul** start their drive back to Chicago leaving at 10:30 am, but stop for gas and to say goodbye to **Sonya Wanty** at her Shell station ... on to Fond du Lac at the Applebee’s then back to Lake Shore Drive...Now some us plan to meet again in Waupaca next summer for an informal reunion or ...Until the Trail’s End...

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